PAGANINI—MAN OR DEVIL?

SEE PAGE 130

fantastic ADVENTURES

GRIM DANGER IN A LOST WORLD

JONGOR OF LOST LAND

By Robert Moore Williams

OCTOBER
20c

FANTASY — MYSTERY — ADVENTURE

THORNTON AYRE ★ HENRY KUTTNER ★ JAMES NORMAN

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"Boys, in 1 minute through that door will come our new star salesman—"

JUST when we had got to thinking our sales were doing extra all right, J. P., the sales manager, whammed home the old body punch at the first-of-the-month meeting.

"Boys," he said, "in just one minute, through that door will come our new star salesman . . . and I expect every man to cooperate with him to the fullest."

No kiddin', a pin dropping would have sounded like an exploding bombshell. Jim Smith looked at me, I stared at Ed Johnson. What was going on? Who was this newcomer? What kind of a bird would he be? Who was going to be "fired"? J. P. sure had us in a dither—and I mean dither!

And then, through the door staggered the office boy carrying a tray as big as a cart wheel. On top of it stood twelve big, gleaming bottles of Listerine Antiseptic.

J. P. grabbed the nearest one off the tray and slammed it down on the desk.

"Here he is," he bellowed, "and none of you guys had better laugh, either. For a long time I've noticed that some of you men—and I'm not mentioning any names, all too frequently have a breath that would knock a cow down. It all adds up to this: *If I've noticed it, customers must have noticed it, too.* And that's bound to be bad for business. After coming up against a case of halitosis a couple of times, a customer is entitled to close the door on you—*for keeps.*"

We all stirred uneasily.

"From now on," J. P. continued, "this is an order; take a swig of Listerine Antiseptic every morning before you hit the street. Get that? Not now and then after a big night . . . but *every* morning. Step up, gentlemen, and get your bottle."

Maybe J. P. was right, and maybe it's only coincidence, but I'm doggoned if the sales for the next six months weren't better, in spite of a lot of tricky stuff from our competitors.

How's *Your* Breath?

In business, it's just common sense to take precautions that your breath doesn't offend. Odor seldom gets an order . . . often loses one.

More and more smart salesmen recognize this and start the business day with Listerine. Notable for its antiseptic and deodorant power, Listerine renders the breath sweeter, fresher, purer.

Why not get in the habit of using Listerine Antiseptic yourself? It makes your mouth feel so wonderfully fresh and clean. The moment Listerine enters the oral cavity, it begins to halt the fermentation of tiny food particles which, some authorities say, is the principal cause of bad breath, then overcomes the odors that fermentation causes.

Keep Listerine Antiseptic handy at home and in the office, and tuck a bottle in your bag when you travel. Rinse the mouth with it before every business and social engagement. It really pays! Lambert Pharmacal Co., *St. Louis, Mo.*

LISTERINE CHECKS HALITOSIS *(Bad Breath)*

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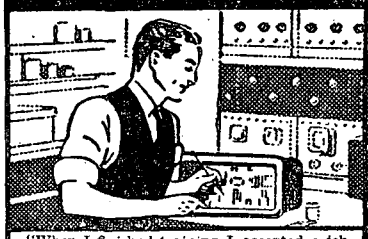
I Jumped My Pay from $18 to $50 a Week!

Here's how I did it

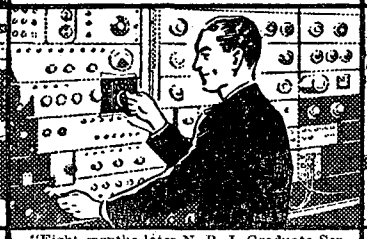
by S. J. E.
(NAME AND ADDRESS SENT UPON REQUEST)

"I had an $18 a week job in a shoe factory. I'd probably be at it today if I hadn't read about the opportunities in Radio and started training at home for them."

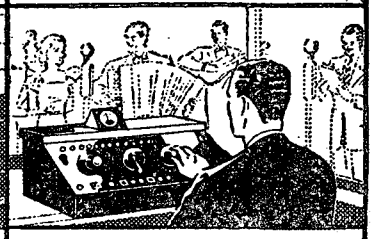
"The training National Radio Institute gave me was so practical I was soon ready to make $5 to $10 a week in spare time servicing Radio sets."



"When I finished training I accepted a job as serviceman with a Radio store. In three weeks I was made service manager at more than twice what I earned in the shoe factory."



"Eight months later N. R. I. Graduate Service Department sent me to Station KWCR as a Radio operator. Now I am Radio Engineer at Station WSUI. I am also connected with Television Station W9XK."



"N. R. I. Training took me out of a low-pay shoe factory job and put me into Radio at good pay. Radio is growing fast."

J. E. SMITH,
President
National Radio
Institute Established 25 Years

Find out today how I Train You at Home to BE A RADIO TECHNICIAN

If you can't see a future in your present job, feel you'll never make much more money, if you're in a seasonal field, subject to lay offs, IT'S TIME NOW to investigate Radio. Trained Radio Technicians make good money, and you don't have to give up your present job or leave home to learn Radio. I train you at home nights in your spare time.

Why Many Radio Technicians Make $30, $40, $50 a Week

Radio broadcasting stations employ engineers, operators, technicians. Radio manufacturers employ testers, inspectors, foremen, servicemen in good-pay jobs. Radio jobbers, dealers, employ installation and servicemen. Many Radio Technicians open their own Radio sales and repair businesses and make $30, $40, $50 a week. Others hold their regular jobs and make $5 to $10 a week fixing Radios in spare time. Automobile, Police, Aviation, Commercial Radio; Loudspeaker Systems, Electronic Devices are other fields offering opportunities for which N. R. I. gives the required knowledge of Radio. Television promises to open many good jobs soon.

Many Make $5 to $10 a Week Extra in Spare Time While Learning

The day you enroll, I start sending you Extra Money Job Sheets which start showing you how to do Radio repair jobs. Throughout your Course I send plans and directions which have helped many make $5 to $10 a week extra in spare time while learning. I send special Radio equipment to conduct experiments and build circuits. This 50-50 training method makes learning at home interesting, fascinating, practical. I ALSO GIVE YOU A MODERN, PROFESSIONAL ALL-WAVE, ALL-PURPOSE SET SERVICING INSTRUMENT to help you make money fixing Radios while learning and equip you for full time work after you graduate.

Find Out What Radio and Television Offers You

Act Today! Mail the coupon for my 64-page book, "Rich Rewards in Radio." It points out Radio's spare time and full time opportunities and those coming in Television; tells about my Course in Radio and Television; shows more than 100 letters from men I have trained, telling what they are doing and earning. Read my money back agreement. MAIL COUPON in an envelope or paste on a penny postcard—NOW!

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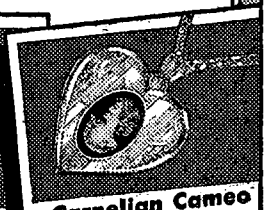

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VOL. 2
NO. 8

Fantastic ADVENTURES

TRADE MARK REGISTERED

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Front cover painting by J. Allen St. John depicting a scene from Jongor of Lost Land. Illustrations by Robert Fuqua, Julian S. Krupa, Frank R. Paul, Ralph Johnson, R. Newman, Rod Ruth, Joe Sewell.

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VOLUME 2, NUMBER 8

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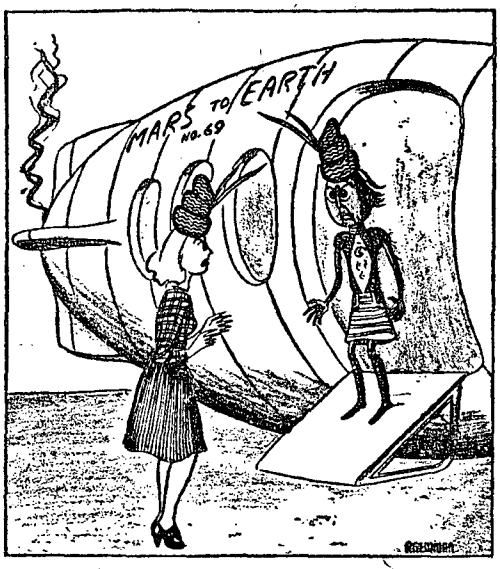
The Editor's Notebook

A CONFIDENTIAL CHAT WITH THE EDITOR

THE news story of the year in the fantasy fiction world is the coming Science Fiction Convention to be held in Chicago. Sponsored by the Illini Fantasy Fictioneers, under the direction of prominent fan Bob Tucker, Mark Reinsberg, Chicago amateur publisher, who is also a fan, and Erle Korshak, fantasy fiction's Beau Brummell, indications are that it will be even more successful than last year's New York session, which gained nation-wide attention in *Time* Magazine.

Our readers will remember the write-up of that convention which appeared in FANTASTIC ADVENTURES, and will recall that it was held in honor of Frank R. Paul, the grand old artist of fantasy fiction. This year, Edward E. Smith, Ph. D., will be honored for his classic novels of the past ten years, especially the famous "Skylark" series.

Fans from all over the country are expected to attend, to meet famous authors and editors, and to further the advancement of their favorite literature — imaginative fiction.



"I'll sue that milliner when I get back to Mars!"

THE first session will be held at 10:00 A.M. on September 1st. The session on the 2nd will be informal. The place is the Hotel Chicagoan, located on Madison near Dearborn. All fans are invited, and everything is free. Original illustrations from FANTASTIC ADVENTURES and AMAZING STORIES will be given away free to all fans who sign the convention register.

WITH this issue of FANTASTIC ADVENTURES we present a cover painting by a man new to our magazine, but certainly not new to readers of fantasy fiction. He is J. Allen St. John, who gained fame by his work in illustrating Edgar Rice Burroughs' stories of Tarzan, John Carter, David Innes and Carson Napier.

He now adds to his fine portrayals the new character of Jongor, featured in our lead story this month. Robert Moore Williams is the author.

YOUR editors recently visited Ralph Milne Farley at his home in Wisconsin, attending a meeting of the Milwaukee Fictioneers, which includes among its members, Fantasy Writers Robert Bloch and Arthur Tofte. Present also was Charlie Hornig, Eando Binder, Robert Moore Williams, and James Norman. The outcome will probably be several very good stories for our future issues.

CHICAGO also has its authors' group, and this one is perhaps even stronger in fantasy writers. We attended a meeting recently at which stories were discussed with great gusto. Don Wilcox, David Wright O'Brien, Eando Binder, Robert Moore Williams, William P. McGivern, A. R. Steber, Alexander Blade, Jack West and John York Cabot were present.

A READER writes in and asks: "Whatever happened to Edmond Hamilton? Why doesn't he appear in your pages as he used to?"

Well, nothing has happened to the old master. In fact, he returns next issue with a rather unusual fantasy about a horse who could talk—and how! It'll prove beyond all doubt that Hamilton can throw humor around as well as space ships.

STARDUST, a little magazine put out by a fan in Chicago by the name of Lawrence Hamling, will be featured at the 1940 Chicago Convention. It is an amazingly well printed book, and full of articles and odd stories of interest to readers of fantasy. If you come to the convention, look up Hamling and his unusual book.

(Continued on page 77)

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AMERICA *must*

IT HAS BECOME increasingly clear to those who have eyes with which to see, that America is facing the gravest emergency in her history. It is also clear that the steps now being taken to prepare our country against this emergency are shockingly inadequate.

WE FACE A combination of powerful enemies in both Europe and Asia, who control between them military establishments of the most fantastic proportions ever contemplated in this world. Hungry and predatory, they are ruled by an acknowledged dream of world conquest. Their hatred and contempt for us and our system of life is implacable and unbounded. Also, the greatest booty in the world is to be found here in the rich and unprotected United States.

AMERICANS HAVE only one course to pursue; they must organize immediately with every resource in their power to meet the shattering attack soon to be made on them, or, by being strong, avert it. The half-way measures now employed and contemplated are far from sufficient. Unless we are to suffer the fate of France and China, we must immediately organize to take summary action against the traitors within our gates, and must arm to the teeth to discourage attack from abroad. We should demand universal military conscription. We should take over immediately all the islands in the Caribbean which may have a bearing on our national defense. We should do these things now.

LET US NOT be entangled in glib catch-phrases which belong to a dead era, or be lulled into insecurity by the agents of foreign powers in whose interest it is to keep America helpless and weak. Modern war is swift and complete. It can only be fought with trained men and machines, not hoarded dollars or beautifully expressed social definitions. Its onslaught can no more be resisted by antiquated weapons than the bows and arrows of the Indians could stop the coming of the white man. Smug talk of our industrial greatness as indicating a capacity to turn out the sinews of modern war within a matter of weeks or months, so as to be able to repel a determined invader, is so much mischievous nonsense. Read the speech of our American Chief of Staff, General

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prepare NOW!

George Marshall, to the Senate on April 30th. He states that "we have not manufactured a big gun for many years," and that it would take two and a half years to manufacture an ordinary 16-inch gun and carriage. To revamp our industrial establishment to turn out anti-aircraft and anti-tank guns, as well as a formidable air and tank corps, will take a period of years, even under the best organization. Neither can an adequate military and naval reserve be established over-night. Modern war demands expert organization and intensive training of men.

ALL OF THIS must be taken out of the hands of the politicians and placed in the custody of competent men who should be given full authority to act swiftly and energetically. If we do not immediately take every step in such a preparation program with vigor and iron will, our rich nation is inviting attack and despoliation.

SUCH A COURSE will demand a certain amount of sacrifice from all. It will involve huge expenditures, which will have to be paid for by the American people in the form of extra taxes; it may involve a violation of our present wage and hour definitions. It represents a profound change in our way of life and in our thinking; but it is urgently required if we are to save our institutions from ruin.

THE WRECKAGE OF France and China and the imminent disaster threatening Britain are living examples of the folly of any other course than that of complete armed preparedness.

LET US NOT wait until we are attacked. We must act fully and competently now, while there is yet time. Impress this on the minds of all public officials as being the will of the nation, and it will be done . . . Write, wire or phone your congressman or senators.

WILLIAM B. ZIFF

William B. Ziff

Publisher

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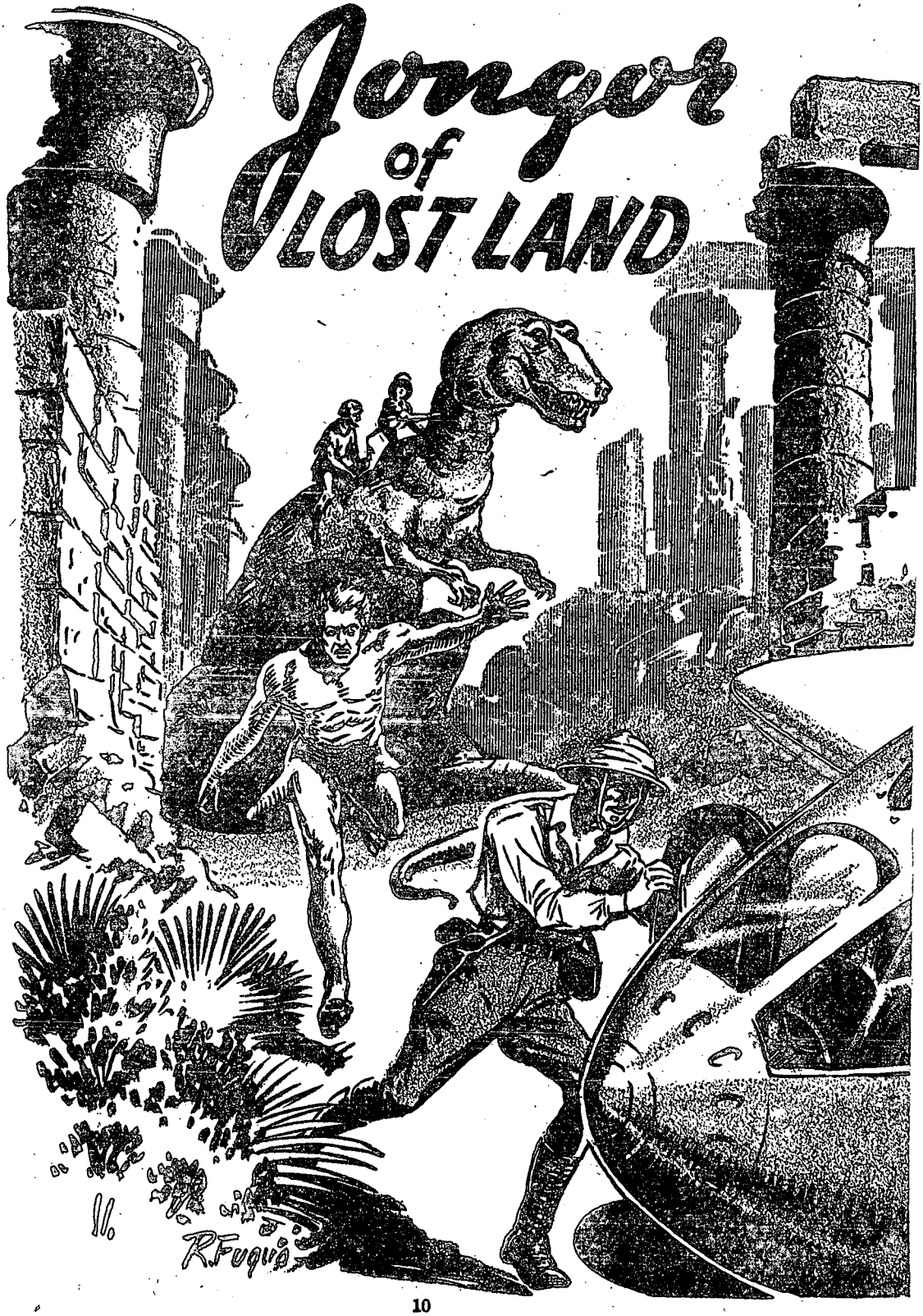
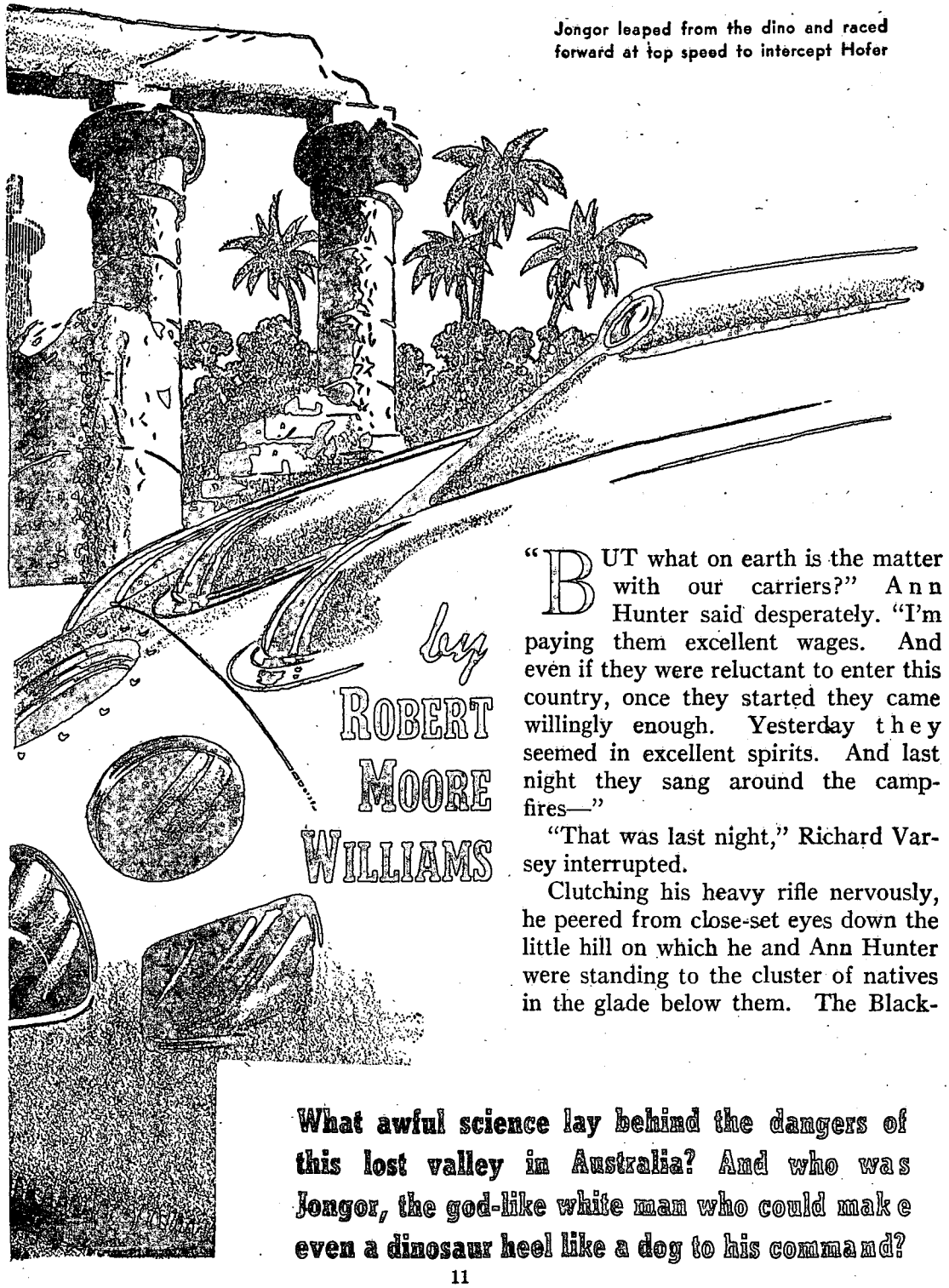
Jongor of Lost Land





Jongor leaped from the dino and raced forward at top speed to intercept Hofer

by ROBERT MOORE WILLIAMS

"BUT what on earth is the matter with our carriers?" Ann Hunter said desperately. "I'm paying them excellent wages. And even if they were reluctant to enter this country, once they started they came willingly enough. Yesterday they seemed in excellent spirits. And last night they sang around the campfires—"

"That was last night," Richard Varsey interrupted.

Clutching his heavy rifle nervously, he peered from close-set eyes down the little hill on which he and Ann Hunter were standing to the cluster of natives in the glade below them. The Black-

What awful science lay behind the dangers of this lost valley in Australia? And who was Jongor, the god-like white man who could make even a dinosaur heel like a dog to his command?

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fellows had been employed as carriers. But this morning they had refused to pick up their loads.

"Hofer is talking to them," Varsey continued. "He knows their lingo and he'll find out what's the matter with them. I might mention, Ann, that this fellow Hofer is a damned good man. You were lucky when he came to you and offered to guide this expedition."

Down below them the girl could see Hofer talking to the natives. They were answering him sullenly, or—and this was more often the case—not answering him at all. They squatted on their heels and looked at the ground. Ann Hunter did not miss the fact that their weapons were near at hand. Long knives, spears, and bows and arrows were within easy reach.

Hofer was talking to them. They were paying no attention to him. Instead they were glancing, surreptitiously and uneasily, at the country around them.

It was a wild mountainous section. The peaks were not particularly high, but they were broken and battered in hundreds of places. Giant knife gashes cut the soil. Ancient lava flows were everywhere. Not far to the south was the great desert of Australia, on the fringes of which the Bushmen and the Blackfellows found a precarious existence.

"Do—do you think there is danger they will attack?" the girl asked.

"How the hell should I know?" Varsey nervously answered.

Ann Hunter looked at him. She saw the nervous tension of the man. Somehow she had never liked Richard Varsey. She liked him less than ever now. He looked as if he would go to pieces any minute. A sweat-clotted beard covered his face. He constantly fingered his rifle.

But she said nothing. After all, she was indebted to Varsey. For it was Varsey who had brought her news that Alan Hunter might still be alive in Lost Land.

Alan Hunter was her twin brother. Two years previously, at the age of twenty, he had left college and had gone on an exploring expedition—and had not returned.

Instead Richard Varsey had come to Ann Hunter at her home in New York, to tell her:

"Your brother is held captive by the natives. I was with him. I barely managed to escape with my life, but in spite of all I could do, the natives captured your brother."

Ann Hunter had not hesitated. Her parents were dead, her brother was all the family she had. Born and reared in all the luxury that wealth could buy, nevertheless, she started out to face the wildest wilderness on the face of the globe. Death, or worse than death, might easily be waiting for her. Ann Hunter would never hesitate. Clad in whipcord breeches, light but serviceable boots, wearing a cork helmet, with a light caliber but extremely hard-hitting sporting rifle in her sun-browned hands, she looked at Varsey.

He flushed under her gaze. "Sorry, Ann," he mumbled. "But I've been in this country before. And I tell you there are things here that the rest of the world doesn't know about."

"What are you talking about?"

HE moved restlessly. "I don't know. Maybe it's superstition, but there is something dark and mysterious and deadly in this part of the world. It's a feeling in the air, mostly, but I always have the impression there is somebody behind me watching everything I do. I turn and look and there is never anything."

"Fever?" she queried.

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"No. We're past the fever country now. Look!" He broke off. "Hofer has quit talking to them. He's coming up here. I don't like the looks of this, Ann. I don't like it a little bit."

The guide was coming up the little rise toward them. Short in stature and strongly built, he seemed very calm. But there was an air of alertness about him.

He clumped up to them. "Sorry," he said, wiping perspiration from his face. "The black devils have decided not to go any farther. And there doesn't seem to be much that can be done about it. I even offered to increase their wages, but they wouldn't begin to listen." His face was dark with anger.

Hofer's clothing and equipment were the plainest and cheapest obtainable. His rifle, however, was an excellent piece, a foreign gun. Although he was a guide, the occasional sentences he let drop betrayed he was well educated. He was neither British nor Australian, as would have been expected. Ever since she had hired him, Ann had wondered why he was content to be a guide in a country where chances of employment were extremely small.

"What's the matter with the carriers?" she questioned. "Haven't they been well treated?"

"They've been treated well enough," Hofer snorted. "Too damned well, if anything. If I had my way, these natives would mend their manners in a hurry. No, it's not the treatment. It's something else." He hesitated and glanced at the girl.

"You can speak plainly," she said. "What is it?"

"It's damned foolishness," he apologized. "They're lying to me. But they say a voice from the air came to them in the night. It told them not to go on. That's why they won't move."

"A voice from the air!" Varsey ejaculated. "That's ridiculous! They're stalling. They know we have to have carriers, so they're holding us up."

Hofer shook his head. The man seemed worried. But there was an air of eagerness about him, of suppressed excitement, as if he were on the verge of some tremendous discovery.

"It's more than that," he said. "They really believe this thing happened. And they're scared, badly scared—*What in the hell is that?*"

A yell had come from below them. The natives had dropped to their knees and were rubbing their noses in the dirt.

"That's the way they act when one of their chiefs comes," Hofer muttered. "But no one is coming."

ANN saw the guide look quickly to the right and the left. She followed his gaze. The actions of the natives indicated they expected someone. But she saw no one. And who could possibly be traveling through this remote section? There wasn't another white person within hundreds of miles, unless it was her brother Alan.

"Listen!" Varsey rasped. "Do you hear that?"

Ann Hunter caught the sound. It sent a chill of sudden fear down her spine. She gasped in startled dismay.

A voice was speaking from the air! It seemed to come from everywhere and from nowhere. It was a harsh, droning murmur, speaking in drumming gutturals that Ann recognized as vaguely resembling the language of the Blackfellows. And it was coming from no recognizable source!

She looked wildly around. "There must be someone hidden near here," she whispered. "Perhaps the speaker is concealed behind the rocks. He's throwing his voice."

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"It isn't that," Hofer shook his head.

THE harsh gutturals grew louder and clearer.

"It's talking to the natives!" Hofer hissed, mad excitement and fear mingled in his voice. "Be quiet so I can understand what it is saying."

An instant later the guide jerked around.

"It's telling the natives to attack us!" he rasped. "Quick! Jump in behind those rocks. The Blackfellows are going to charge!"

Varsey did not need to be told what to do. He scrambled madly to the protection of a series of large boulders. The girl followed. Her lips tightened as she took in Varsey's flight.

"Here they come!" Hofer called. His rifle spoke.

Now the voice had ceased. It had vanished as quickly and as abruptly as it had come, going back into nowhere with an abruptness that was as spine-chilling as its appearance had been. The instant the voice ceased, the natives leaped for their weapons. They came up the hill toward the shelter where the three white people crouched.

To Ann Hunter, her rifle firm against her cheek as she peered over the top of the boulder, the natives looked like dancing, woolly-headed devils. She could see the bones thrust through their matted hair, the daubs of paint on their faces. She could hear the screech of their battle cries. But mostly she could see the spears in their hands, the long, ugly knives, the bending bows.

An arrow flashed over Ann's head. She drew a quick bead on the bowman. Her rifle crashed. The savage dropped the bow as though it were a hot rivet, and stared stupidly at the torn fingers of his hand. The bullet had struck his fingers where they held the bow.

Ann knew, without stopping to think, what little chance they had. Although they had repeating rifles, there were over forty of the natives. The three rifles mowed them down. But they kept on coming.

"Never saw 'em face a gun like this before," Hofer panted, as he reloaded. "That voice raised them to a frenzy. They thought their god was speaking to them."

The guide was savage and grim. His gun roared methodically. And each time he fired a native went down. He took slow, steady aim, driving his shots home with a savagery for which even the fact that he was fighting for his life could not account.

"Why did I ever come back to this damned hell hole?" Varsey wailed. "I got out of here once and I ought to have been glad I saved my life!"

The natives were less than a hundred yards away. Their charge was continuing. But they no longer leaped blindly forward. Instead they were taking advantage of every spot of cover, leaping from boulder to clump of shrubbery to stone outcropping. The air was crisscrossed with spears. Arrows were leaping upward in a flashing stream.

The Blackfellows were dying. Some of them. But three rifles cannot simultaneously hit forty dodging, ducking targets. And the fact that their comrades were dying did not deter the natives in the least.

Ann Hunter found herself thinking, "I'm going to die here, on a rocky ledge in Australia. I'm going to die. It's only a matter of minutes now. They will slice me to pieces with those huge knives. I'm going to die here . . ."

Her face was stained with powder-smoke. She did not stop firing, methodically slipping cartridges into the magazine of her rifle.

She saw a woolly head come up over

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a rock not ten feet away. The fellow had a spear. Yelling, he drew back his arm to throw it. Ann heard the yell gurgle in his throat as her bullet knocked him backward.

BUT another leaped to take his place. And another. And still another. She heard Hofer panting. Varsey was screaming as he tried to fill his magazine. Out of the corner of her eyes, she saw he was trying to put the cartridges in backward, he was that hysterical.

A huge native armed with a knife came leaping forward. Ann Hunter drew a bead on him, pulled the trigger. The rifle clicked. Empty!

It was the end. Ann lifted the clubbed rifle to try to ward off the descending knife.

Something throbbed in the air. Ann Hunter was tensely waiting for the charge of the savage with the knife. Oddly and inexplicably, she saw he was no longer coming. And she was wondering why he wasn't coming.

The feathered tip of an arrow protruded from his chest!

Another native took up the charge. Something throbbed in the air again. A hissing streak went past the girl's head, *coming from behind.* The arrow caught this fellow in the throat.

Dazedly Ann Hunter turned to see what was happening. It was the first time that she saw Jongor.

He was there on a rock ledge above them, a brown-skinned giant. Clad in a leopard skin, a huge black bow in his hand, tips of arrows protruding from the quiver slung over his shoulder, a knife thrust through his belt, Jongor stood there. The string of his bow was humming a steady song of death. It was this bowstring she had heard throbbing. From the bow, arrow after arrow was leaping downward.

The natives had already been terribly mauled by the three rifles. The appearance of this giant on the ledge above their three intended victims startled the savages. This new enemy looked like a god of vengeance to them. The arrows that leaped downward startled them more. They broke and ran.

A heavy, unreal silence hung over the three whites. Open-mouthed, they stared upward at their deliverer.

Jongor dropped lithely from the ledge and came toward them.

Varsey stared at him from terror-filled eyes. His mouth hung open. He swallowed convulsively, as though to clear a choking obstruction from his throat.

What Varsey was doing neither Ann nor Hofer noticed. They were busy staring at this giant, leaping lithely from boulder to boulder toward them.

Varsey's face was a mask of fear. He flung up his gun, which he had finally succeeded in reloading. The rifle roared as he pressed the trigger. Off among the rocks there came a groan and a sound as of a body falling.

Ann and Hofer whirled at the sound of the rifle. Ann was the nearest. She knocked the smoking gun from Varsey's hands.

"You fool!" she snapped at him. "That man saved our lives—and you shot him!"

"He ordered the natives to attack us in the first place," Varsey argued incoherently. "Sure I shot him. He had it coming!"

HE looked at Hofer as if he expected to find support from that quarter. The guide didn't say a word. His pale blue eyes—the washed-out blue eyes of the natural-born killer—drilled into Varsey's. Richard Varsey quailed away.

"I thought he was attacking us," he quavered. "Damn you, Hofer, don't

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look at me like that! You know as well as I do—"

"Shut up!" said Hofer icily. "That man saved our lives. If you lose your head again, I'll put a bullet through you myself."

The guide turned on his heel. But Jongor had disappeared.

Ann Hunter was already running toward the spot where the giant had fallen after Varsey's bullet had gone winging toward him. She thought he had fallen among the rocks. She was crying as she searched for him.

They didn't find Jongor. There was a bright splotch of blood on the rocks. But Jongor was gone.

"He's wounded," Ann said accusingly to Varsey. "You shot him!"

CHAPTER II

Jongor

"I'M for getting out of here," said Varsey bluntly.

The man was still white and shaken. His lips were blue with fear.

"Our carriers have deserted. We don't stand a chance in the world of getting into that hell hole of Lost Land without carriers. I'm for gathering what supplies we can and getting out while the getting is good. What do you say, Ann—Miss Hunter? You're the boss."

"I'm not backing out now," the girl said firmly. "We must be near Lost Land. Entering it will be no more difficult than attempting to return. And I'm not leaving while there is still a chance of finding my brother. He may be a captive of the natives, held in some dirty hut, forced to work as a slave. His life depends on our finding him. *I'm* going forward, into Lost Land—if I can get there."

"But it may mean death to continue," Varsey argued heatedly. "And we haven't a chance of succeeding, now. I'll leave it to Hofer," he said, turning to the silent guide. "You've had experience in this sort of thing. We haven't a hope of getting through without our carriers, have we? You think we should turn back, don't you?"

Hofer shook his head. "We didn't kill all the natives. Some of them escaped. They will return to their people and tell them what happened. If we attempt to return, we will find the Blackfellows waiting for us. We're certain to be ambushed. Our best chance — and about our only chance — is to continue forward."

"But that voice we heard!" Varsey pleaded. "That voice coming from nowhere, telling the natives to attack us. And that giant with the bow and arrow! He may be up there ahead of us somewhere. And no telling what else!"

"Yes," the guide said eagerly. "That voice from the air—maybe the explanation for that is to be found somewhere ahead of us. There is little doubt about it. The explanation must be somewhere in Lost Land. I'm going forward," he ended decisively.

"But—"

"If you do not choose to accompany us you can, of course, return by yourself," Hofer said flatly, his pale blue eyes flicking contemptuously over Varsey.

The latter flushed angrily. He started to say something, but caught Hofer's eye on him again, and quickly changed his mind. His mouth set in a flat line that was like the blade of a knife.

JONGOR watched. When Varsey had thrown up his rifle, Jongor had caught the movement. He did not know much about guns, but he did know—with the certainty of one whose

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life has been spent in the midst of unrelenting danger—that his life was being threatened. He had seen the Blackfellows go down under the savage thunder of the rifles.

His movement, when Varsey threw up his rifle to fire, had been the wary, instinctive movement of the jungle beast. He had thrown himself down and to one side. The bullet had barely scratched his shoulder. The wound had already stopped bleeding.

He had dropped behind a boulder, and had then run, as silently as the shadow of a moving cloud, among the rocks. When Ann and Hofer arrived at the place where Jongor had dropped from sight, he was gone.

Now he watched. From the shelter of a fold of rock, he saw the two men and the woman arguing. They eventually went down to the packs the carriers had dropped. From the mass of supplies, they made three bundles small enough to be carried on the back. Hofer's pack was small. He took only the absolute necessities, salt, a tiny medical kit, a little food. Of cartridges for his rifle, he took plenty.

THE girl's pack was larger. And Varsey's was the largest of the three. He could barely lift it to his shoulders.

They disposed of their surplus supplies in a crude cache. Jongor's lips curled contemptuously as they tried to conceal the things they were leaving behind. Even the dullest-eyed Blackfellow would instantly discover where the supplies were hidden. The three people, Jongor discovered, knew nothing about practical concealment.

He thought they would follow the Blackfellows. He was glad of that. These people were intruders here. They were strangers. They had come from that mysterious world that lay far away. When the Blackfellows attacked them, he had aided them only through impulse. As a reward, they had tried to kill him, which served him right for trying to help strangers. In all Jongor's experience, one thing was universally true of strangers — they were dangerous.

Jongor was surprised when they continued in the same direction they had been moving. They weren't leaving, then. They were going forward, into Lost Land. They were entering his country. The trail they were following would lead them, if they had the nerve to follow the extremely hazardous passage, into that vast valley that was Lost Land.

They would pass almost immediately under him. Silently Jongor drew his bow, nocked a feathered arrow on the string.

The intruders were coming closer every minute. Jongor drew himself erect. The bow bent in a great arc. Hofer was in the lead. Then came the girl. Then Varsey. The tip of Jongor's arrow covered Hofer.

Jongor had only to release it. The feathered shaft would leap downward. It would go completely through the guide's body. Another shaft would be on the way almost before the first had landed. It would strike the girl. And a third, flashing downward almost as quickly as rifle fire, would finish Varsey.

They were strangers. One of them had tried to kill their rescuer. The bow creaked softly as the tough wood complained of the tension of the string. The three whites were directly under him now. This was the time! Release the arrow!

But the bowstring did not hum its song of whistling death. Slowly the gray-eyed giant let the bow slip back from the great arc. The nocked arrow

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did not leap downward.

Jongor watched them move along beneath the fold of rock where he had taken refuge. He watched them sweat along the trail toward Lost Land. His eyes followed the girl. His smooth brown face became sad. Thoughts turned over in his mind. The girl— He remembered another girl who looked amazingly like this one who had passed below him—his mother.

Ten years had passed since Jongor's mother had died, and his father with her. Jongor had been twelve years old when the *teros* caught them. His face became dark with rage as he remembered how the screaming teros had killed his father and his mother, leaving him alone in the vast expanse of Lost Land.

His father had been Captain Robert Gordon, one-time U. S. Naval aviator, and the remnants of the smashed plane in which he and his bride had attempted to fly over Lost Land were Jongor's most sacred possession. Fierce air currents had sucked the plane downward in that epic flight. Out of control, it had crashed to earth. Captain Robert Gordon and his bride had barely escaped with their lives. And even though they escaped the smashup, they discovered there was no way to escape from Lost Land.

Twisted, tortuous mountains surrounded the vast valley, and beyond the mountains was the desert, waiting to suck the life from those who attempted to cross it. Captain Gordon had made the attempt. He had found his way through the mountains. But always the desert had turned him back.

THERE, in Lost Land, Jongor had been born. His parents had named him John Gordon, but his first infant efforts to pronounce his name had resulted in "Jon-gor." So "Jongor" he had become, to his adoring mother and father. And Jongor he had remained.

When the teros killed his parents, after a hard but happy existence twelve years later, Jongor had faced the terrible prospect of survival in a land armed with claw and fang. A twelve-year-old boy would have been a juicy tidbit for the beasts in the valley, a pleasant appetizer. He no longer had the strength of his father to protect him, his mother to care for him. He had to face the world—alone.

The first few years after the death of his parents had been a nightmare. Not only was John a forlorn and exceedingly lonesome boy, but death lay in wait for him at every turn of the trail. Death waited beside every water hole. Danger lurked in the movement of every twig. Against the terrible forms death took in Lost Land, young John Gordon could not fight back. He could only run.

He had run. And his legs had grown long and his chest deep. There came a time when he no longer had to subsist on snails and frogs and fruit, on fish and smaller animals. There came a time when Jongor, who had learned to live by running, walked unafraid. His father had made him a bow and arrow. It had been little more than a toy, to amuse and please the eager youngster.

But as the years passed Jongor had made other bows, each one stronger than the last, each one sending its feathered death farther, each bowstring throbbing louder, until now Jongor feared nothing in all Lost Land, except one thing. And since he stayed away from the one thing that he feared, the one thing that was stronger than even his mighty muscles, deadly in a way even his keen mind could not understand, he was relatively safe.

The sight of Ann Hunter stirred strange nostalgic memories in Jongor's

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mind. She was a girl. His mother had been a girl. So he did not launch the arrow from his mighty bow.

Instead he followed the little party.

All day long he followed them. He could have made three times the speed they were making. They moved cautiously along narrow ledges, with hundreds of feet of drop below them, where Jongor could have traveled as swiftly and as silently as a shadow. They toiled painfully up steep slopes where he could have gone at a dead run.

But their lives had never depended on the speed in their heels.

Two days later, when the three entered Lost Land, they were obviously exhausted. Varsey had already disposed of most of his pack. The girl was moving unsteadily, stopping often to rest.

Only Hofer plodded doggedly on, as though he were driven by a fierce, relentless urge to move forward.

Jongor watched them enter the huge valley. To the left, stretching away until they were lost in the distance, was a line of high, rocky cliffs. To the right, spreading out like the arc of a great fan, was an expanse of steaming jungle. It was the same as much of the land surface of the globe must have been when the earth was young—bog, swamp, clumps of trees rising on little knolls, dirty, stagnant water caught in still pools. Reeds, creeper vines, saw-briars grew everywhere. There was no obvious path through it.

Jongor saw Hofer hesitate. The guide's eyes swept the expanse of Lost Land. The three talked earnestly for several minutes. Then they did what Jongor was afraid they would do. They turned to the left, along the line of cliffs. The going was obviously easier there.

Even if he had not known what lived in the cliffs, Jongor's keen eyes would have found the beasts lurking there.

WHAT was the matter with these three people, he wondered. Couldn't they see? Were their senses so dull they could not detect what was waiting for them?

They must be blind, he decided. They didn't even see the dino down there in the swamp. The dino was resting in a clump of trees, but Jongor knew he was there. He could see the tiny birds flying around his back.

Jongor looked at the dino. Then he looked at his wrist. Around his muscular left arm, just above the waist, he wore a curious bracelet. The strangely linked metal, covered with weird hieroglyphics, was worn smooth.

The bracelet was set with a single stone as big as a silver dollar. The stone was a crystal. Although Jongor didn't know it, the crystal was of exactly the same type that is used to tune modern radio transmitters to an allotted wavelength.

It had been carefully ground and polished. Some long-dead workman had hollowed out the center of it. The interior of the crystal was creamy with tiny veins of light. As Jongor looked at it, the veins of light in the heart of the stone seemed to pulsate with a faint illumination.

"DAMN the mosquitoes!" said Varsey petulantly. The stinging insects rose in clouds from the swampland. He slapped at them.

Ann Hunter looked backward, along the trail they had followed. During the first day, there had been hope in her face, but it had long since fled.

Hofer saw her. "There's no use looking for him," the guide said. "Varsey plugged him. He's either dead or he's holing up somewhere licking his wounds."

"You speak of him as if you thought he was an animal," she said angrily.

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"That's probably what he is. These natives aren't far above the animal stage," Varsey interposed contemptuously. "He's a native freak."

"He isn't, either!" the girl flared. There was real anger in her voice now. "He's white. I saw him and I know. His skin is brown from living in the sun, but he isn't a native."

Varsey relapsed into a sullen silence. They plodded forward without another word.

"I—I don't like this country," said Ann protestingly. "I get the creepy feeling that something is watching me from every side."

Her eyes swept the jungle. She was accustomed to living in cities where the most dangerous thing is a speeding automobile. In spite of her recent experiences, she had not learned how to look for danger in the jungle. Her eyes passed over the resting dino. Jongor would have seen it instantly, but Ann did not even notice the strange blotchy pattern in the trees.

Nor did Hofer. He was not looking for a dino, and certainly he was not expecting to see one. Consequently he didn't see it. The wind—what little wind there was down here below the mountains—blew from the monstrosity toward them, so it did not smell them. And its eyesight was very poor.

Something creaked on the cliffs above them. The guide's ears caught the sound. He stopped, and looked up.

But the tero—for such was the dino—was still. It had seen them and had shifted its position slightly, getting ready. Its skin was the same color as the cliffs and unless it moved, it blended so well with the rocks as to be almost invisible.

"You see something?" Varsey demanded.

"I guess not," Hofer answered. "I heard a noise that sounded like a saddle creaking but it must not have been anything." He moved forward.

"Let's find a place and camp for the night," Varsey implored. "I'm tired as a dog."

"You'll probably be more tired than you are now before you have a chance to rest," Hofer grunted.

DOGGEDLY, step by step, the three plodded on.

The tero drew itself into a knot ready for launching. Its whole misshapen body quivered with eagerness at the sight of the food passing below it. The beady eyes winked with the fierce hunger that it felt. And there was food—juicy, helpless food—for the taking. The tero leaped.

Ann Hunter saw the shadow hurtling down the side of the cliff. She turned tired eyes upward. She thought, when she first saw the shadow, that a strangely shaped cloud was passing over the sun and throwing a darkened blotch on the cliff below. Then she saw what caused that swiftly moving shadow. It was no cloud. It was—

Her scream rent the air.

Hofer leaped like a startled dog. He, too, had seen the shadow an instant after Ann. Her scream roused him to instant alertness.

He looked up. His eyes bulged.

"Good God!" he shouted. "A pterodactyl!"

It was the great winged lizard, the forerunner of the present-day birds, the hideous monstrosity with leathery wings and long bill lined with needle-sharp teeth, that may easily have given rise to the legends of flying dragons that occur in the folk lore of almost all primitive peoples.

It was bigger than an eagle, bigger even than a South American condor. But unlike the eagle and the condor, it was not a good flyer. It could not rise

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from the ground. As a result, the pterodactyls lurked among cliffs, from which they could launch themselves downward, their great leathery wings serving as excellent gliders. If the wind was strong, or if they gained enough speed in the descent, they could zoom upward, sweeping and circling like a gull. Unlike a gull, they could not maintain their flight.

The great bill, armed with needle-sharp teeth, the curved clawed wings, their size and the fact that they dropped like a plummet on their unsuspecting prey, made them dangerous antagonists.

The sight of the bird-lizard diving toward them paralyzed Ann Hunter. For the first time in her life, she was completely unnerved. A rabbit crouching in the grass, suddenly hearing the whistle of wind around the wings of a diving hawk, has the same moment of paralysis. Ann Hunter could not move.

Varsey gibbered. The same kind of paralysis gripped him.

Hofer seemed built of nerveless iron. A shocked cry of recognition had leaped from his lips when he saw the pterodactyl plummeting toward them. Then he went into action.

His rifle leaped to his shoulder. But even in this moment of extreme danger, he did not fire blindly. He took aim. Seconds ticked away while the barrel of his rifle followed the plunging tero. It was falling like a stone. Each split second brought it nearer.

Hofer's finger tightened gently on the trigger. The rifle spat fire. The bullet smashed through the left wing of the bird-beast. It hit the tero, but not in a vital spot, merely throwing it off its line of flight. The thing had been aiming straight at Ann. It would have struck her, with beak and claws and flapping wings dealing terrible blows, if the bullet had not blocked it.

The tero landed ten feet short of its mark. But it wasn't dead. Far from it. The pain of the bullet wound had merely enraged it. It leaped forward.

To the frightened girl, the tero looked as big as a horse. She saw the huge wings beating the air, the outstretched beak lined with gaping teeth, the cruel, gleaming, beady eyes. The wings were not strong enough to lift it off the ground. But they lifted it part way, so that it seemed to leap at her. It hissed like a snake.

HOFER shot the monstrosity through the head. It collapsed into a quivering heap of leathery membranes right at Ann Hunter's feet.

"Thanks," the girl panted, white-faced. "It would have got me—if you hadn't shot it."

The guide ignored her. He looked at the pterodactyl. There was amazed, incredulous wonder on his face. He shoved his cork helmet back, and wiped the sweat from his face.

"Himmel!" he muttered. "A pterodactyl! Who would have believed *that?* Why, the last of those things perished from Earth thousands of years ago!"

In this moment of stress, an accent had crept into Hofer's voice. Muttering, he shook his head again. His eyes went from the dying bird-lizard up the cliff from which it had leaped. The shock of what he saw there froze his face into an expressionless mask.

CHAPTER III

The Dino Rider

"GOD save us!" Hofer gasped. "There isn't just *one* pterodactyl up there on those cliffs! Dozens, there must be! A whole nest of them, there is. Look!"

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Ann Hunter felt her flesh crawl when her startled eyes swept again up the cliffs. The ragged line of rocks was broken into ledges, peaks and caves. Every ledge, every peak, every cave seemed to harbor one of the monsters. The cliffs were alive with them. As far as she could see, the shuddery shapes moved.

Attracted either by the shot, or by the sight of the first bird-lizard diving, they were coming out of the caves, crawling far out on the ledges, scrambling up on the pinnacles of stone that rose above the cliffs. The whole vast escarpment seemed in motion.

Everywhere Ann looked she saw wings moving, beaks gaping. The sound of the moving bodies was a heavy, creaky, continuous rustle. The air was suddenly heavy with the nauseous reek of decay that made the girl fight to keep from retching. Hisses sounded.

"We can't go any farther in this direction," Hofer whispered. "We must go back, and quickly."

Already one of the pterodactyls had launched downward in a screaming dive. It was the nearest one to them, now that the first one had been killed. It swooped, attempted to zoom upward, its wings flapping heavily—and fell short.

But it kept coming toward them. It could move rapidly on the ground. Another dived from the cliffs. And another.

"Back!" Hofer shouted. Ann and Varsey needed no urging to obey his command. They could see the teros coming.

Ann knew the pterodactyls were coming faster than they could retreat. She knew also that their guns could stop a dozen of the flapping monsters. In a pinch they might stop half a hundred of the things. But they could not stop them all. There were too many. And they had absolutely no sense of danger. The slaughter of the first wave would not in the least deter the second.

Ann Hunter saw death flapping after them. It was Varsey who saw death coming from the rear. He was in the lead, stumbling in panic-stricken flight away from the teros. He stopped suddenly. Ann bumped into him.

"Ugh!" Varsey gurgled. With trembling hand, he pointed.

Down in the swamp, in a clump of trees, a crackling noise sounded. Something huge heaved to its feet there. All of its great length was not visible through the trees. But what the girl saw made her think a mountain was heaving up in the swamp. It looked that big to her. She saw the great gray sides, the armor plate, the incredibly horned snout.

Hofer saw it too. "A dinosaur!" he panted. *"Himmel!* But it is logical enough. Where we find pterodactyls, dinosaurs we will also find. But who would have thought that such things anywhere on earth had remained alive in the Twentieth Century?"

Most of the fright that the sudden appearance of the diving teros had caused seemed to have left the stolid guide. The sight of the dinosaur did not seem to scare him either.

"Shoot it!" Varsey yelled, fumbling with his rifle.

Hofer sighed. "With what, my friend? Those tons of flesh cannot be stopped by anything short of a cannon. Do you have a cannon in your vest pocket?"

THE dinosaur was still within the trees. They could follow its lumbering progress by the disturbance it created. Behind them the pterodactyls flapped relentlessly.

"But it's cutting off our retreat!"

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Varsey screeched. "Those damned birds will be on us in minutes. You're the guide here. Do something, damn you!"

"What would you suggest, my friend?" Hofer answered.

"Anything! There are caves in the cliffs! We could hide in one of them!"

"And have the pterodactyls surround us? We could pile them up with bullets in front of the cave until their dead bodies blocked the entrance, or until we ran out of ammunition. Then the rest would claw us out. No, it is no use. This is the end of the trail for us."

Hofer shrugged resignedly. "There are cliffs on one side and swamps on the other. The pterodactyls are coming behind us and a dinosaur cuts off our retreat. Run we cannot. We will not be able to fight long. This is the end. We will die here."

Ann Hunter felt the hopelessness in the guide's voice. She knew it was the measure of their doom. Until now, nothing had seemed to daunt Hofer. He had been tireless, he had driven himself relentlessly, as if some hidden, secret urge forced him to endure all obstacles. He had faced the natives without flinching.

He didn't flinch now. He merely sighed, and said:

"If I saw anything to do, I would do it. All I can say is, if you know any prayers, now is the time to say them."

He was stolidly resigned to his fate. It was as if the secret urge that had made him an irresistible force in motion had here met an immovable object, with the result that all drive had gone out of him.

The dinosaur lumbered forward. It came out of the group of trees. It moved slowly, but with the certainty of resistless doom. Three sets of human eyes were fixed on it.

Only when it was completely clear of the trees did Ann Hunter see how strange that dinosaur really was. There was an incredible hump just behind its neck. She had seen pictures of dinosaurs, she had seen reconstructions of the gigantic beasts in museums. But never had she seen a dinosaur with this kind of hump.

She could not believe her eyes. Then recognition was forced home to her as the beast came nearer.

"It's he!" she shouted, wild exultation in her voice.

Jongor was the hump behind the neck of the dinosaur!

"MOVE faster, thou great hulk of useless meat!" Jongor urgently commanded. "Can you not see the teros are coming? Move, I say. Now is no time to loaf. Hump yourself. Sleeping time is past. Now your great bulk and little brains are badly needed. Swing along, you lumbering rascal!"

The dino had been sleeping among the trees when Jongor approached. It was not yet fully awakened.

Jongor kept his eyes on the three people. He knew they had seen him. They could not well avoid noticing the commotion the dinosaur was making as it lumbered forward. They were staring at him.

The teros were flapping nearer every second. Some of them, launching themselves from higher places along the cliff, were managing to maintain themselves in the air. There was a chance that these few would be able to fly all the way to their intended victims.

"Run to me!" Jongor yelled. "Or the teros will get you."

HE had decided to come to their aid for three reasons. One, they were white, as he was. But that was not much of a reason. A much better reason was the girl. Somehow he did not

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want to see her die. About the two men, he cared nothing. One of them had even tried to kill him.

But the girl reminded him of another girl he had once known, so very long ago: his mother. And the teros had killed this other girl, which brought Jongor to his third and most compelling reason of all: he hated the teros. He hated them with a blind, bitter, unreasoning fury. For they had killed the only two people he had ever loved, his parents.

Because of that, all his life Jongor had taken a terrible toll of the pterodactyls. He had slain them with arrows, he had raided their nests, he had killed their young. He had set cunning traps for them, and tricky snares.

If he could have done it, he would have killed all the pterodactyls in the whole world. And by the same token, everything the pterodactyls attacked was automatically his friend.

One of the teros that had apparently been asleep when the three people passed under its ledge, now awakened. It looked down. The three two-legged creatures were too far away. It saw Jongor on the back of the dinosaur. Jongor was within range of its glide.

It launched itself straight toward the bronzed young giant. Jongor saw it coming. The dinosaur was out of the swamp now, galloping along on hard ground. The tero swooped.

"This for you, tero!" Jongor yelled, releasing the arrow. The shaft split the heart of the lizard-bird. It collapsed in mid-flight, and fell like the hulk of dead flesh that it was.

"Faster!" Jongor commanded the dino. "Do you not see there is little time? We must save the girl, and the others too, despite the fact that they tried to kill me. Move, you overgrown ox!"

And the huge creature did move.

"IT'S that freak native!" Varsey gasped. "He's been following us all the time on that dinosaur!"

"Is it possible that he is able to control it?" Hofer queried in a stupefied tone of voice. "He rides it. It seems to obey him."

"That's it!" Varsey shouted. "He has trapped us! He waited until the pterodactyls cut us off from the front. Now he's using the dinosaur to block our escape!"

Hofer fingered his rifle.

"Maybe he can control the pterodactyls too!" Varsey shrilled. "He may have made them attack us. Shoot him!"

"If I was sure—" the guide said, hesitating.

"You can be certain he's back of this somewhere!" Varsey screamed. "You're a better shot than I am. Go on and shoot him. Then we'll have a chance to escape."

Hofer lifted his rifle. His eyes squinted through the sights. The barrel moved as he followed the course of the dinosaur.

Good shooting was automatic with the guide. Even in the direful circumstances facing them, with every second of vital importance, he did not hurry his shot. Gently his finger tightened on the trigger.

The heavy rifle roared. But the bullet went harmlessly up into the air.

Ann Hunter had heard Varsey urging the guide to shoot. But everything was happening so rapidly that the meaning had scarcely registered on her mind. She turned just in time to see Hofer's finger grow white on the trigger. She knocked the rifle up.

"Ann!" Varsey yelled. "You don't know what you're doing! That freak native on that animal is coming to kill us! He's back of this whole thing!"

"He's not!" the girl cried angrily.

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"Didn't you hear him call that he was coming to help?"

"That's only a ruse to get near," Varsey insisted. "If Hofer won't shoot him, I will." He flung up his rifle.

A SECOND later Varsey was looking straight into the barrel of Ann's gun.

"Put that rifle down, Richard Varsey," she said grimly. "If you don't, I'll shoot you if it's the last thing I ever do on this earth."

"Ann! You—you can't mean it!"

"I never meant anything more than that. The same goes for you too, Hofer. If you try to lift that rifle to your shoulder again, I'll shoot you, too."

Her voice was so tense that it sounded brittle. She was near the breaking point physically, but there was no sign that her determination was weakening. Her blue eyes were blazing. She would carry out her threat. Both men knew it. Varsey stood without moving. Hofer let the muzzle of his gun drop.

"Just as you say, Miss Hunter," the guide said. "But that dinosaur is mighty close and those pterodactyls are even closer."

It was a race, flapping pterodactyls on one side and a dinosaur running with ungainly leaps on the other. Ann could hear the thunder of the beast's feet on the ground. She could hear its rider shouting,

"Faster, thou great mountain of worm food! Move faster, or I shall beat you half to death when this is over."

She didn't look around. For one thing, she did not dare take her eyes off Hofer and Varsey. And for another, she could see the teros.

One tero was almost on them. Ann lifted her rifle and fired over Varsey's shoulder. Her bullet winged it. But others were coming.

"Turn around, you two, and shoot those pterodactyls," she ordered crisply.

They obeyed her. The three guns crashed out their fire. Ann could hear, between the rifle shots, the crashing of the dinosaur coming closer. She also heard the hiss of arrows over her head, saw the feathered shafts leaping out to deal death among the ranks of the advancing bird-lizards.

"Stop, thou cousin of a snake!" a voice commanded. "Halt, I say! This is far enough."

The thunderous sound of the dinosaur's hoofs died away. The voice called again.

"Up here behind me, girl. Quickly."

Ann Hunter turned. The bronzed young giant was leaning over the neck of the dinosaur and was extending a hand down toward her.

In ordinary circumstances, Ann would have been afraid to go near the giant beast. But now she felt no fear. She ran up. Jongor's hand caught her, lifted her upward with the ease of a man lifting a baby. As she swung upward, she caught a glimpse of the face of her rescuer. Gray-eyed and brown-skinned, he was, and handsome. His eyes were smiling at her.

"Save the men, too," she whispered.

Jongor hesitated. Hofer and Varsey stopped firing. They were glancing nervously from the man on the dinosaur to the approaching pterodactyls.

"Up behind me, you men," Jongor called.

They did not have time to disobey him, or to argue. He snatched them upward literally out of the very teeth of the teros. The men clutched at the scaly sides of the giant animal, fighting desperately to hold on.

"Run swiftly again, little one," Jon-

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gor commanded. "Run through the swamps, where these teros cannot follow."

The "little one" responded. He wheeled, knocking down brush and small trees, sending stones clattering with his feet, and raced into the swamp. He carried four people as easily as he carried one. To his giant muscles, the added load was no more than four fleas would have been.

CHAPTER IV

The "Shaking Death"

TWO hours later the dinosaur came up out of the swamp near the place where the three adventurers had entered Lost Land. The cliffs of the pterodactyls were far behind.

Ann Hunter continuously said to herself,

"I'm alive. I thought I was going to die, but I didn't. I'm alive. He saved us again."

The "he" meant Jongor. Ann had slung her rifle over her shoulder. She was holding firmly with both hands to the animal skin which girded Jongor's body to keep from falling off the lumbering dinosaur.

"Stop now, little one," Jongor commanded. "This is far enough."

The beast halted. Jongor slid to the ground. He reached up and assisted Ann down. Varsey and Hofer, like two incredulous scarecrows sliding down a barn roof, tumbled to the ground.

"I—I don't know how to thank you," Ann Hunter said, looking up at the young giant looming over her. For the first time, she realized how big this man was. He was at least six feet tall and he weighed very near two hundred pounds. Every pound of that weight was muscle and bone. There wasn't an ounce of fat anywhere on him. He was as magnificent as a Greek statue.

Impulsively she thrust out her hand. She was watching Jongor's face. She saw him hesitate. He seemed to be trying to remember something. Then he smiled and took her hand. Her fingers were lost in that mighty palm, but his grip was strangely gentle.

"There is no need—to thank me," he answered slowly. He looked past her, at the two men, who had gotten to their feet. Jongor's keen eyes went over Hofer. The guide stepped forward.

"Young man," he said, "I think we've made a mistake. I—well, I didn't know. And it looked like you might be an enemy too. May I apologize?"

Jongor measured the guide. He saw the force and drive of the man. He caught unmistakable hints of the iron will under the surface. Without knowing exactly how he knew it, he knew that this man would be a formidable antagonist.

"You don't have to apologize," he answered. "I understand. You thought I was an enemy."

Looking over Hofer's shoulder, he saw Varsey. He instantly recognized Varsey as the one who had shot at him when he had routed the attacking natives. His face hardened.

"You!" Jongor said. There was an unmistakable grimness in his voice.

Varsey went as white as death. He tried to say something, and choked. He backed away.

Ann Hunter was still watching Jongor's face. She saw recognition flash across it as he looked at Varsey. And anger. Timidly she laid her hand on the giant's arm.

"Mr. Varsey didn't mean to shoot at you," she tried to explain. "He was terribly frightened, and he thought you were attacking us. So he fired, without thinking."

The girl caught the tension of the situation. The gray-eyed giant who had

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saved them was staring at Varsey. There was anger on his face. Also—and this was utterly inexplicable—there was disgust, and contempt. Varsey's attempt to kill Jongor could account for the anger. But not for the disgust and the contempt. The mad thought flashed through Ann's mind: had these two men met before? She dismissed it as impossible.

"Please," she begged. "I know you're angry, but Mr. Varsey just didn't understand that you were trying to help us."

He looked down at her. "What? Oh, that. I wasn't thinking about it. It is not important."

"What?" she questioned. "I don't understand."

Jongor shrugged. "It is nothing."

HE seemed to want to change the subject. Ann was glad of that. As soon as she asked the next question, she felt the tension begin to relax. But it remained in the background, a hidden, unknown, sinister threat.

"Who—who are you?" she asked. Ever since she first saw him, she had been wanting to ask that question.

"I am Jongor."

"Jongor?" She was puzzled. "Is that all of your name? And how do you happen to be here in this forlorn country? And you speak English!"

The giant laughed. "I am Jongor," he said. "The name is really John Gordon, but I couldn't say both words when I was a little tot. So I called myself Jongor. And I still think of myself by that name."

"But—"

"I was born in this land," Jongor added. Tersely, he gave her his story.

It was an incredible experience for Ann Hunter. She listened to this gray-eyed giant tell, simply and directly, of his life here in Lost Land, of the death of his parents, of the almost impossible odds he had faced in living. She knew he was telling the truth, and yet in spite of herself she found she was doubting him.

To her, everything was unreal. She kept telling herself that this was some dream she was having, some nightmare from which she would presently awaken. She did not know whether or not she wanted to awaken.

Jongor leaned against the left leg of the dinosaur. The beast stood patiently.

"And that's all the story," Jongor finished. "I was born here. I grew up here. I have occasionally ventured out to the edge of the desert, but I have never attempted to cross it. I know there is a world outside somewhere, but I have never tried to reach it. To me, this is home."

The dinosaur reached its head around. Jongor rubbed its nose.

"Do you want to go now, little one?" he inquired, as if the beast could understand him. "Very well. You may go back to your beloved swamp. Go on." He slapped it on the leg.

The dinosaur snorted. It moved away.

"Himmel!" Hofer gasped. "That mighty beast—how do you control it?

Involuntarily, Jongor's eyes went to the crystal imbedded in the bracelet on his wrist. He started to answer, but looked again at Hofer, and changed his mind.

"The dino and I are friends," he explained.

"That is a lie!" the guide exploded. "That dinosaur, it does not have a thimbleful of brains! If you saved its life, it could not understand. Friendship would mean nothing to it. Ever since I saw you riding on it, I wondered how you controlled it. Now you tell it to go away. It obeys you. That proves you can control it. How do you do it?"

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The secret but momentarily forgotten urge seemed to flame again in the guide. His manner was suddenly demanding. He was not asking a favor. He was insisting on an explanation as his right.

Jongor stared at him. "Yes, I can control the dinos," the giant answered, as if making up his mind. "But how it is done I do not know. The Muros—But I cannot explain it."

"You must explain it!" the guide insisted. "It is of tremendous importance. It may be the clue that I have been seeking—" He quickly caught himself. "It may be of vast scientific importance. Tell me! How do you control the dinosaurs? And what are the Muros?"

UNTIL then Ann Hunter had not realized how vitally significant was the fact that this gray-eyed giant who called himself Jongor could control a dinosaur. And control it perfectly, so perfectly that it seemed to understand every word he said!

Dogs and horses could be easily trained, she knew; but she also knew that Hofer was right when he said the dinosaur did not have enough brains to be trained. The beast was a mountain of flesh, but its brainpower was so strictly limited as to be almost nonexistent. And yet Jongor controlled it far better than any huntsman ever controlled his hound!

There was something weirdly mysterious in that control, something as incredible and as uncanny as—why, as the voice that came from the air, the voice that had ordered the natives to attack them! The voice had not spoken again. They had chosen to ignore it completely. In the stress of circumstances, Ann had forgotten it too.

But now, when she saw the huge beast lumber off toward the swamp in obedience to a command, she remembered the voice that had come weirdly whispering out of nowhere. Fear laid cold, constricting fingers on her throat.

"I tell you I can't explain it," Jongor answered. "It is done through the crystal I wear on my arm."

"What!" Hofer snapped.

Jongor held up the ornament. However he did not remove it from his arm.

Hofer stepped forward. He glanced quickly at the curiously designed crystal, and then suspiciously up at Jongor's face.

"You aren't lying," he said, speaking half aloud as if he were talking to himself. "You're telling the truth. Somehow that crystal enables you to control the dinosaurs. But how—where did you get it, the crystal, I mean?"

"I found it," Jongor answered.

"Found it!" The guide's face grew purple. "Where?"

Jongor drew back. "Before I answer any more of your questions, let me ask you some of my own. What are you doing here in this valley? Why did you come here? What do you want?"

"I came here because—" Hofer hesitated.

"I can explain that," Ann interrupted. "We came searching for my brother."

"Your brother?"

"Yes. He and Mr. Varsey entered this country. He was captured by the natives. Mr. Varsey escaped and carried the news to me. If my brother is anywhere in this valley, you will be the person to know about him. Have you seen him? Do you know anything about him?"

Jongor saw the longing in her face. He understood instantly how she felt. For long years he had longed for his parents. He looked at her, and then his eyes flicked to Varsey, who paled.

"I'm sorry," Jongor answered, "that your brother is lost."

"But have you seen him?" the girl cried.

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"This is a big valley," Jongor answered. "I do not know all of the things that are in it." He turned to Hofer. "The girl came seeking her brother. Why did you come?"

"What do you mean?" the guide evaded.

"Why did you come to this land?"

"Because—"

"He is my guide," Ann explained.

Jongor said nothing. His face showed no trace of any emotion. Instead he pointed up toward the encircling wall of mountains.

"There is the pass by which you entered," he said. "You can easily find your way to it. The teros are too far away to molest you. And the dinos do not leave the swamps, so you will be safe."

"You're telling us to leave?" the girl quavered.

"No," he shook his head. "I am not telling you to leave. You may do as you please. But there is death here in this land." He gestured pointedly toward the swamps and the cliffs.

"Do you mean—"

HE read her meaning. "No, I do not mean the teros and the dinos. They are dangerous. But there are things here that are a thousand times more deadly. There is danger everywhere. It is in the very air we breathe. If you want to live, all I can say is—leave this land immediately."

"But I can't," the girl whispered. "Don't you understand? I can't leave until I know what has happened to my brother. He may be here, somewhere. I can't go away until I know."

"This guy is right, Ann," Varsey said, speaking for the first time. "We had better get out of this place while we can. The natives may be laying for us outside, but we at least stand a chance with them. Isn't that right, Hofer?"

"That's right," the guide answered. "And again I say, you may leave if you wish. But I'm staying here."

"Thank you," Ann Hunter said. "I knew I could rely on you to stick with me."

Jongor had been a silent listener to the little conference. He saw the pallid fear on Varsey's face and his lips tightened contemptuously. He did not despise the man because he was a coward but for another reason that he alone knew. He watched Hofer, wondering about the unspoken motive that he sensed in the guide.

The wan girl turned to Jongor. "We're staying," she said, "I hope you don't mind."

"I don't mind," he answered. "But others will."

"What are you talking about?" Hofer queried. "What others?"

But Jongor did not answer. In the space of a second, he seemed to forget completely the existence of the guide.

They were standing in an open spot. Stretching away in one direction was the jungle. In the other direction the mountains climbed up into the sky. The sun was already behind the towering range of hills. It threw long fingers of shadow out across the reeking swamp. Night was coming.

And—something besides the night was coming!

Jongor stood like a statue, every muscle tense and still, his head thrown up. He was listening.

Ann Hunter found she was listening too. Something grunted in the swamp. A bird called raucously, querulously, as if in fear, and then was suddenly silent. A moisture-laden wind came creeping from the jungle. Oddly, it was a cold wind. Ann suddenly shivered. She listened. There was a thin wailing sound in the air. It was so far away, she could not be certain she heard

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it. It came, it went. What it was she didn't know, but she told herself it could not be serious—

"Run!" Jongor barked with a suddenness that was overwhelming.

He didn't wait to see whether they obeyed him. He knew what was going to happen, and he automatically assumed they knew too, forgetting that they were unacquainted with the incredible dangers of this land. His stride seemed effortless as he sped away, but no expert dash man could have bettered the speed he was making.

Jongor had not taken many steps before he discovered the three were not following him. He looked back over his shoulder. They were staring at him in uncomprehending perplexity. They had made no effort to move.

"Run!" he commanded. "You fools! Death is coming!"

That startled them. They looked nervously in every direction, but seeing nothing, merely stared at him.

Grinding his teeth in bitter rage at their apparent stupidity, Jongor raced back to them. Before Ann knew what was happening, he had flung her over his shoulder, and set off again.

"Run or die!" he shouted at the two men.

"He knows what he's doing," Hofer swore. "We damned well better follow him!"

JONGOR raced to the protection of the nearest growth of trees. He crouched there and waited for the two men to come up.

"What is it?" Varsey sputtered, as they slid into the cover.

"The shaking death," Jongor answered. "Watch."

Down where they had stood only minutes before, Ann Hunter saw something happening. What she at first thought was a column of dust had leaped into the air. Like a miniature tornado, the dust seemed to be swirling rapidly. It much resembled an overgrown dust swirl seen on a hot day in summer. It shocked her to realize this was not dust. It was—mist. *And it was glowing.*

Boulders had been imbedded in the soil where the four of them had stood. The surface had been strewn with pebbles and sand. The girl saw the sand begin to dance into the air. Then the pebbles were lifted up.

"Look!" she heard Hofer gasp. "The boulders are lifting now!"

The boulders *were* rising into the air! They were swirling in a circle. At first they moved slowly but every second saw them spinning faster. Faster still they went. It was like the funnel of a tornado. A droning sound came from it. The drone grew louder and louder. A gnawing roar accompanied it.

"The ground is shaking!" Varsey whispered hoarsely.

Ann could feel a gigantic pulsation flowing through the ground under her feet. The whole earth seemed to be vibrating.

"Power!" Hofer muttered. "What a vast power is being released!"

"It is the shaking death!" Jongor said. "What it touches, it destroys."

"But where does it come from? What causes it? Is it a natural phenomenon?" the guide queried anxiously.

"It—"

"Look! It's coming toward us!" Varsey bleated.

The swirling column of dust had begun to move. It was drifting over the ground, and it was coming toward the trees where the four were hidden.

Jongor looked at the sky. "It will follow us as long as there is light," he said. "If darkness comes soon enough, we may escape. Otherwise—we die! Come. We must try to hide."

He took Ann's hand in his, began

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running easily. He kept away from the hills. The ground was open there. He stayed in the trees and jungle growth that circled the swamp.

Ann heard the column of dust strike the trees. There was a rending crash of breaking limbs and torn trunks. The sound was exactly like the roar emitted by a tornado when it strikes a forest. Ann glanced back, horror-stricken.

Leaves, limbs, and broken, twisted trunks of trees were flying into the air in a mad, roaring vortex.

CHAPTER V

Land of Sub-humans

TO Ann Hunter, fleeing from an incredible tornado that followed slowly but persistently, it seemed that night would never come. Behind her, sounding clearly through the growing dusk, was the monstrous gnawing roar of that vortex of spinning mist. Often she stumbled and fell, but each time Jongor lifted her to her feet. Finally he led her into a dense growth of trees and she collapsed.

"I can't go any farther," she whispered. "I simply can't. But you go on. Save yourself."

Here among the trees, the night was coming rapidly. Jongor was a dark shadow in the dusk. He shook his head.

"If you can go no farther, neither will I."

"But you must," the girl said stubbornly. "Mr. Varsey and Mr. Hofer will stay with me."

Varsey and Hofer were sprawled on the ground a dozen yards away. Jongor glanced toward them.

"I doubt if they will help you much," he said tersely.

The girl was tired. She was so badly scared that fear had almost ceased to have a meaning for her. The gnawing roar was still rocking through the trees. The ground was trembling. She could not tell whether or not the spinning whirlwind was coming nearer. Her nerves were stretched far past the breaking point.

"Those men are my friends," she snapped.

"Varsey is a weakling and a coward," Jongor answered. "You might as well face the truth. Hofer is no weakling. He is dangerous and deadly. But both of them are using you for some purpose of their own."

"That's—that's not possible," Ann stammered. "Mr. Varsey has been under a terrible strain. He's not entirely responsible for his actions. But I regard Mr. Hofer as absolutely reliable. You have," she flared, "a lot of nerve to try to turn me against my friends! After all, I know them much better than I know you.

"You have seemed to save our lives but, as Mr. Varsey has suggested, how do I know it was not you who ordered the natives to attack? You were present at the time. There was no one else within miles of us. It might have been your voice that came out of the air. You could control that dinosaur. How can I be certain you can not control the pterodactyls?"

Her face seemed pale and distraught. "Maybe you sent them flying down upon us, and then pretended to come and rescue us. Yes, I know you killed several of the pterodactyls. You also killed some of the natives. But maybe you're just cold and cruel enough to kill human beings to give realism to an act you are putting on!

"You look and act like a savage," Ann stormed. "How do I know the story you told us is the truth? How do I know you aren't causing this terrible thing that is coming toward us?"

She gestured angrily toward it.

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Jongor stood without moving. Ann could not see him clearly in the gathering dusk but she knew he was staring at her.

"Girl!" There was bitterness in his voice, and the note of a sullen pain. "You don't know what you're saying. I am Jongor. And I assure you, it does not matter to me whether or not you believe what I have said. You may believe what you please."

He was a shadow in the dusk. Then suddenly he was a shadow no longer. No snap of a broken twig, no rustle of leaves, no sound of any kind betrayed what had happened. Ann Hunter only knew she could not see him any more.

"Jongor!" she said.

There was no answer.

Fright forced the weariness from her legs. She leaped to her feet.

"Jongor!" she called frantically. "I didn't mean it. I was tired and distracted. I didn't mean what I said. *Jongor!* Come back!"

BUT Jongor did not come back. He did not answer. As silent as a wraith, he had slid into the jungle and away.

"I'm a fool!" Ann Hunter told herself. "He was telling the truth. It was in his eyes, in the tone of his voice. And I called him a liar! Jongor! I'm sorry. I didn't mean it. Please, come back," she pleaded.

"Shut up that yelling!" Varsey huskily called to her. "You want to tell the whole world where we're hiding?"

"I don't care," the girl snapped, tears in her eyes.

"What is the matter?" Hofer inquired, coming toward her.

Ann told him what had happened. The guide said nothing.

"That roar is not as loud now," Varsey spoke up, crawling toward them. "You know, I'll bet that freak native was attracting that thing."

True enough, the gnawing growl was diminishing in violence. Sand, released from the lessening vortex, began to sift down through the trees. The ground quit shaking. Off in the distance they could hear boulders crashing again to earth.

"Something was controlling that tornado," said Hofer. "It was sent directly to us. And when we ran, it followed us. That means the person who controlled it could see us. We were being watched."

The guide struck fist into palm. "There is some mighty secret here in this Lost Land," he said excitedly. "There is a science here greater than any known on Earth today. Tomorrow we will begin exploring this land. We will find what is hidden here!"

Gradually the throb of the freak vortex that Jongor called the "shaking death" vanished. Complete darkness came. Eventually the moon rose, throwing its pale light down over the rugged mountains that surrounded Lost Land.

Ann Hunter and her two companions remained in the shelter of the trees. They did not dare make a fire, for fear it would call attention to their hiding place. Food they had to have, and they ate frugally of what remained of the little supply they had brought with them.

"We must be constantly on guard," said Hofer. "I will take the first watch, until one o'clock. Then I will awaken you, Varsey, and you can remain on guard the rest of the night. We will let you have a full night's sleep, Miss Hunter," he said kindly.

"Thank you," the girl answered. "I'm dead tired."

She sprawled on the ground between the roots of a huge tree. In spite of her weariness, sleep came slowly. She

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heard coughing grunts from the jungle around them. Far off there was a sudden snarl of beasts fighting. From the noise they made, Ann guessed they were dinosaurs, which brought home again to her the strange weirdness of this land.

It was a world that was not only lost to physical geography, but it was lost to time as well. Everywhere else on Earth evolution was hundreds of thousands of years ahead of Lost Land. But here the time clock was keeping lost and forgotten centuries. Here was the mad savagery of a primeval world.

And here was something else — a voice that came out of the air. Here also was some incredible secret. And here was a gray-eyed giant who played with dinosaurs. Ann kept thinking of him. She dozed off to sleep . . .

The roar of Hofer's rifle startled her to wakefulness. As she sat up, her first thought was that day had come and the sun had risen. The darkness was gone. She could see. There was a ball of fire over the trees that she thought was the sun.

Then, with a stunning shock, Ann saw that the ball of fire was not the sun. It was an airship of some kind. Hanging in the air without movement, it glowed with an illumination that reminded her of witchfire. Reaching down from it were fingers of brilliant light which, she realized, were searchlights.

THAT was why the darkness was gone. Those searchlights were illuminating the trees as well as the sun could have done.

"What is it?" Ann gasped bewilderedly. "What's happening?"

"I don't know," Hofer answered in a shaken tone of voice. "There's a ship over us."

He fired again. Ann reached for her rifle. By this time, Varsey was awake. His rifle sent a finger of flame reaching upward.

"They can't get down to us!" Hofer shouted. "The ship can't land because of the trees. But watch out for bombs."

The guide moved backward, firing as he went.

"Come on!" he ordered. "We've got to get out of that light. As long as they can see us, they can pick us off as they please. Run!"

It seemed to the startled, weary girl that all she had done since she entered this mad world had been run. She did not know that one of the fundamental requisites for survival is the ability to escape. For uncounted centuries, the human race survived by running. Jongor had managed to live because he knew how to run.

Now Ann Hunter had to run again. There was no time to wonder where the ship had come from or what kind of creatures manned it. She vaguely realized it was like no ship she had ever seen before. It hung in the air as no helicopter ever did.

The trees will save us, she thought gladly. But then she looked up. The ship was so low it was touching the topmost branches of the trees. A door was open in its side. And from that door something was leaping—*to the trees!* Several of the things jumped from the ship.

Then Ann caught a glimpse of one of the creatures. The sight stunned her. They looked a lot like overgrown monkeys. They were not as tall as a man, but they were heavier built.

With an ease that bespoke long practice, they leaped from the ship to the topmost branches. Long arms went out to the limbs and grasped them. The creatures came tumbling downward.

"That ship is full of monkeys!" Hofer shouted. "Shoot them, quickly!"

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Too late, each of the three realized that the trees had not saved them. The huge jungle growths had merely provided an easy avenue of descent for the creatures who manned the ship.

Rifles spat flame upward. A monkey released his grip on a limb and crashed downward. One was dead. But there were others, dozens of others. The trees were suddenly alive with them. In every direction, they were racing down the trunks.

How could monkeys build a ship such as the one overhead, the girl wondered. It was a ghastly nightmare.

"I'm dreaming," she told herself. "This can't be true!"

But it was true. She knew it was true. She knew also there was no hope to escape—this time. At other times there had been Jongor to save them.

But Jongor was not there now. She had sent him away.

A monkey leaped from a tree squarely on Hofer's shoulders. The guide went down. So did Varsey.

As one of the creatures leaped toward her, Ann saw that it really wasn't a monkey. It was wearing ornaments around its hairy arms. It had on clothes.

"It's human!" she gasped. But there was a crumb of comfort in the thought. Their captors would not be beasts.

Then Ann saw something that sickened her. The creatures had tails. They weren't human. They were subhumans, travesties on the race.

Mercifully the girl fainted as one of the things leaped toward her.

CHAPTER VI

Bride of the Sun

WHEN Ann Hunter recovered consciousness, her mind went back to the time when it had blanked out. She sat up and looked wildly around. She expected to find herself in the forest, with creatures that looked like monkeys but probably weren't.

She wasn't in the forest. The night was gone, as a beam of sunlight slanting through a barred window showed. She was in a damp, gloomy prison cell constructed of huge blocks of stone.

Varsey was lying on a stone bench across the room from her. There was a ragged, dirty bandage around his head.

Hofer was standing at the doorway, peering furtively out through a grill in the metal door. The guide's clothes were torn. There was a lump on his head and dried blood on his face. He looked around when Ann moved, and saw that she was sitting up.

"Are you all right?" he queried. The question was put casually. His tone showed that he was far more interested in his surroundings that he was in her.

"Y—yes," the girl answered. "I—I think so. But where are we? What happened?"

"We've been captured by the pals of your savage friend," Varsey snapped.

"Do you mean Jongor?"

"I don't mean anybody else. That dirty devil!"

"But he didn't send those monkey creatures after us," the girl defended. "He— I said something he didn't like, and he went away."

"And just as soon as he went away those monkeys came!" Varsey said accusingly. "You can't tell *me* that was coincidence! He's after us, for some reason of his own. When he failed to trick us, he sent those monkeys after us. He's a monster! He only looks like a man. He's not human. He gave himself away when he admitted he could control that dinosaur. No human being could do that, and you know it."

Varsey rose to a sitting position. His

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bearded face was cut by lines of fear and hate.

"I'm telling you that Jongor is a monster. He's a biological freak, of some kind. He looks like a man, but he isn't. He evolved here in this world, and he has abilities that we don't know a thing about."

"But he speaks English," the girl protested. "That proves he is what he claims to be."

"That proves he can read our minds!" Varsey said triumphantly.

"But—but mind reading is not possible."

"How do you know it isn't?" he shot back. "Dinosaurs and pterodactyls are impossible, but you've got to admit they're here just the same. Jongor can read our minds. That is how he is able to speak English. When we entered Lost Land, he saw us. He didn't want us here, but before he destroyed us, he wanted to know why we came.

"So he decided to try to be friends with us, so he could find out all about us, why we came, what we wanted. After that—it would be curtains for us. He's been living here in this forsaken hole for God knows how long. He may even be immortal. If you ask me what he's doing, all I can say is I don't know —*yet*.

"But I can guess! He is creating a new race—the monkey-men that we saw. He is discovering new weapons, such as that ship. When he has discovered everything he needs to know, he is going to lead his new race out of this world. He's going to use them to overrun the whole earth. I am firmly convinced that he is the most dangerous *thing* alive on Earth today. It's up to us to kill him—before he kills us!"

HORRIBLE doubts moved through Ann Hunter's mind as she listened to Varsey. She saw the logic back of his reasoning. After all, what did they really know about Jongor? Only what he had told them. Everything Varsey had said could be true. Jongor might have been lying to them, he might have been playing with them as a cat plays with mice. In spite of his appearance, he might not be human. He might be some kind of crazy freak that had evolved here in Lost Land.

"But if he is a freak, he has to evolve from something," the girl said. "What species does he belong to?"

"I think I can answer that," Hofer said. "The monkeys that captured us might easily be his people. Also," the guide continued, "a long time in the past there must have been an advanced race here in Lost Land. I never lost consciousness after the monkeys captured us. They put us in their ship and flew out over the swamp, entirely across the valley.

"When they started to land, I looked from the ship. Down below me in the moonlight I saw what must have been a great city a long time ago. For miles around, it lay below the ship. Great stone buildings, there were, broad streets. Mostly in ruins it is now. Trees are growing in the streets. The buildings have fallen.

"Great columns of fallen stone, I saw, like the columns in the temples of Karnak, in Egypt. Some lost race built a city here once. The race must have vanished, or declined in power. It is possible that this race was sub-human, but very intelligent, and that all of its people did not die.

"Perhaps they have begun to evolve again, and the creature that called himself Jongor may quite possibly have come from them."

"See," said Varsey. "Hofer knows what he is talking about."

The girl said nothing. Was Jongor human? Or was he some strange freak

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of evolution? Had they, in searching for her lost brother, stumbled into a tremendous plot that would eventually be directed against the human race?

Hofer had turned again to the grill.

"Somebody is coming!" he said softly.

From the corridor outside there came the rasp of unshod feet marching over stone. But the feet kept a ragged rhythm. Whatever it was that was coming, there was more than one of them, and they kept a marching cadence that reminded Ann Hunter of a squad of soldiers.

A voice rasped a command and the sound of the marching feet stopped. A bar grated as it was withdrawn from its holding slots. The door opened. One of the monkey-men stepped through the doorway. He boomed an order in a language which Ann Hunter did not understand.

"He's using the speech of the Blackfellows," Hofer hissed. "He said, 'Down, slaves; prostrate yourselves before Alcan, who comes to take you to the Great King for judging.' "

The guide dropped flat on the floor. Varsey slid from the stone bench where he had been lying and scrambled down beside Hofer. Ann Hunter was too startled to obey. She vaguely remembered having read histories in which barbaric peoples forced their captives to crawl before them, but she had assumed the custom had perished from the earth. Consequently the command surprised her. She did not move.

"Down!" Hofer hissed.

"I won't," she said stubbornly, looking defiantly at the creature that had called himself Alcan.

He was a little taller than the other monkey-men standing rigidly at attention in the corridor outside. Nor was he so hairy, but the jeweled ornaments which he wore more than made up for his lack of it. The adornments covered his arms and his chest with a glittering display that would have been worth a fortune in the diamond centers of the world.

UNLIKE the members of his squad, Alcan wore clothes—a ragged breechclout. In one hand he held a pikestaff, which apparently was his badge of office, and in his other hand he held the tip of his bushy tail, with which he was gently tickling himself under the chin. Later Ann was to learn that Alcan owned what was regarded as the most beautiful and the bushiest tail of all this strange people, and that he was inordinately proud of it, and of himself for possessing it.

But now she was mostly concerned with what she saw in his eyes. He was looking at her—approvingly. His black eyes were beginning to glitter. She had not obeyed his command, but there was no anger in his eyes because of that. Instead—there was something far more horrible. Suddenly conscious that her shirt was torn, that the riding breeches she wore revealed every curve of her lithe body, Ann drew back.

Alcan stepped around the two men on the floor and advanced toward her.

"Go away," Ann whispered.

She rose from the stone bench that had served as a bed and faced Alcan.

"Stay away from me," she said huskily. "You stay away from me. Don't you dare touch me!"

Alcan kept coming. Step by step the girl backed away from him until she felt the stone wall at her back. She could retreat no farther.

But Alcan did not touch her. His hands went out toward her, and a scream trembled on her lips when, as though suddenly recollecting something, the fellow glanced hurriedly over his shoulder at the men of his command.

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They were watching him. He stepped quickly away from the girl, but she knew that all that had saved her had been the presence of his men.

Ann shuddered. Alcan might come again, without his men, and what would she do then?

Alcan barked an order.

"He says we are to go before the Great King," Hofer interpreted.

The two men were permitted to rise from the floor. With Ann between them, Alcan leading the way and the guard tramping alertly behind, they were marched down a long, winding corridor and into what at one time in the past must have been a very beautiful throne room.

It was a huge chamber, with tiers of stone columns rising on two sides. Shafts of sunlight filtered down from niches in the wall. Once it had been an impressive place, full of light and beauty. Now it was unspeakably dirty. There had been mosaic work on the floors, but the mosaic was broken and covered with grime. The very air was clammy and oppressive.

On a throne at the end of the chamber, surrounded by fawning sycophants, sat the Great King, an old, gnarled, rheumy-eyed monkey-man. He blinked at them, and squeaked an order.

"Crawl!" Alcan commanded, Hofer translating. "Crawl before the presence of the Great One!"

This time Ann Hunter did not mind crawling. There was a strange gladness in her heart. She was face to face with the ruler of this incredible people.

And he was not Jongor!

Ever since Alcan had said they were to meet the King, Ann had been desperately afraid she would find a gray-eyed giant looking down at her from a barbaric throne. The throne was there, all right, and it was barbaric enough, but Jongor did not sit upon it. Whoever or whatever Jongor really was, then, he did not belong to this race. Varsey and Hofer had been mistaken. Jongor was not the ruler here.

Or was he? Was this rheumy-eyed monstrosity sitting on the throne nothing more than a stooge for Jongor? Did that gray-eyed man of mystery remain in the background, pulling the strings that manipulated the puppets here in this mad world?

THE rheumy-eyed king became very excited when the three captives crawled before him. The appearance of the girl aroused him particularly. At his command, two of the guards seized her and lifted her to her feet. Then they proceeded to parade her back and forth before the throne, just as though she were a model displaying clothes before a group of prospective purchasers.

They forced her to turn, to walk slowly. Ann faced the ordeal without flinching, although her flesh crawled each time she thought of one possible reason for the display they were forcing her to make.

What if they were offering her to this grisly king as a possible inmate of the harem he no doubt possessed! In the ancient world, slave girls had been sold in the market place. And the helpless maidens had been forced to make a similar display of themselves before their prospective buyers.

Was that the purpose of this parade? Were they showing off her good points so the king could decide whether or not he wanted her? Her face whitened with tension.

"I'll die first!" Ann said to herself.

She watched the face of the king. The beady eyes, glittering with excitement, were wide open now. The king nodded. He spoke rapidly, in his language. The girl did not understand. The guards around the throne grinned and licked

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their lips. Whatever the decision of the king had been, it had found favor with them. Alcan, Ann thought, looked a little disappointed, but the others expressed great approval.

She looked down at Hofer; but the guide, stretched on the floor, was stealing glances around the room, and was paying no attention to the ruler.

Again the girl was forced to the floor, and all three of them were compelled to crawl backward away from the monstrosity on the throne. Alcan and his guards returned them to their cell.

The girl's heart was pounding madly in her breast. What was going to be done with her? Was she going to be cast into shame? The question was burning in her mind. And Hofer had heard what the king had said. He knew what was to be done.

"Tell me quickly," Ann whispered. "What did he say? What are they going to do to me?"

But the guide was too excited to answer her.

"Now I know the name of this race of monkey-men!" he was saying. "I should have known when Jongor let it slip. He called them the Muros. They're really the Murians. They're a colony of that race which perished thousands of years ago when its homeland sank under the waters of the Pacific.*

"Perhaps the same catastrophe that sent their homeland down under the waters, lifted up new mountains and blocked their way of escaping from Lost Land. This colony has remained here ever since. They've been degenerating physically and mentally. In the tens of thousands of years that have passed, their city has gone to ruin, their civilization has almost vanished.

"But they still possess some of the science of their ancestors—that airship, the vortex that is the 'shaking death', the voice that comes from the air. They are the Murians, all right; no doubt about it. And they have tails, which means that the Murians must be the missing link that science has been so long seeking. And I have found them! I, Hofer, have succeeded at last—"

He broke off speaking to look at the two people. He was wildly excited, more excited than Ann Hunter had ever seen him.

His outburst of words bewildered her. They carried little meaning to her mind. And less significance. What did it matter if these monkey-men were the famous missing link? What if they were a colony of the long-lost Murians? What did their science matter? Ann wanted to know what that monstrous king had decided to do with her, and she asked Hofer pointblank.

"Oh," he said, as if her question was of no importance. "He said that at last they had found a maiden who was a fit bride for the shining god. You are to become their high priestess."

ANN gasped in relief.

"I thought—I—was afraid that filthy king was going to force me into a harem!"

"No. Nothing like that," Hofer assured her. "He said you were to be the bride of the shining god."

"But what did he mean by that? What is the shining god?"

"Oh, they're sun worshipers. The shining god is the sun. Sun worship is one of the oldest beliefs of man. It is quite natural that we should find it here. Quite natural and logical."

"Sun worshipers!" the girl breathed. "I am to be high priestess to the sun." Her voice was heavy with relief. "If

*"Lost Land", then, is none other than an outpost of the great continent of Mu, which disappeared into the Pacific countless centuries ago, carrying to its doom a civilization which has been the subject of fascinating conjecture for many years.—Ed.

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that is all that is going to happen to me, I don't need to be afraid any longer. I was afraid it was going to be much worse."

Hofer looked curiously at her. For the first time Ann had his full attention. The look on his face sent a sudden spasm of fear through the girl.

"You aren't telling me everything," she challenged. "You're keeping something back. What does the bride of the shining god mean?"

Hofer didn't want to tell her. He tried to evade the question. But the girl insisted.

"Whatever it is, you've got to tell me," she said, a sudden quaver in her voice. "I can take it. Only tell me what it is. This indecision is killing me."

"It means," said Hofer slowly, "that you are to be offered as a living sacrifice to the sun."

"A living sacrifice to the sun!" The words roared in Ann Hunter's ears. She was back in a world belonging to prehistory, in a time when living sacrifices were offered to placate angry gods. She was to be offered on an altar to the sun!

That was why the Murians had paraded her back and forth before the throne of their king! So that he could determine if she was sufficiently beautiful to be a fit mate for their god.

And she was undeniably beautiful. She was a splendid physical specimen. Her beauty and health had doomed her to death!

The room swam before Ann Hunter's eyes. Her head turned in a giddy whirl. She stumbled to the wall to keep from falling. She scarcely saw the door of the room open. Only when she saw the Murians waiting there did she realize it had opened. She heard their voices.

"They have come to prepare you for your marriage with their god," Hofer translated. "There will be feasting for days. You will be bathed and anointed with perfumes and given the choicest clothes. You will have perfect care. Slaves will wait on you. The bride of the shining god must be in perfect physical condition."

Ann was too weak to walk. The Murians had to lead her out of the room.

CHAPTER VII

Life—for a Price

TO Ann Hunter, the days that followed were filled with growing terror. No physical violence was offered her. Her every wish was instantly gratified, if it was within the power of her attendants to do so. The attendants were Murian girls. Like the men, they had tails. They treated her with vast respect. In fact, they rather seemed to envy her because she was fit to be offered to their god, while they were not!

There was feasting in the ruined city. Every day Ann was exhibited before the revelers, as the girl who was to be the bride of the sun. The day of the sacrifice was to be a tremendous festival. For many years the Murians had found no maiden fit for their god; and now that they had found one, the occasion called for prolonged feasting.

Ann Hunter shuddered. Always she watched for an opportunity to escape. But none came. Then she watched for a chance to snatch a dagger and plunge it into her own breast. But the guards were watchful.

She saw nothing of Varsey or Hofer. At first she hoped that they might aid her to escape. Then she realized they were probably also held as prisoners. Or they might have been killed. She tried to question her attendants but they could tell her nothing. Or would not.

Alcan she saw many times. The Mu-

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rian tickled his chin with the tip of his tail, and eyed her hungrily. Several times she caught a speculative glint in his eye. Alcan wanted her. She knew that. But she was reserved for their god, and the Murian did not molest her.

Many times Ann thought of Jongor. Against all reason, she found herself hoping he would come and rescue her. But the days passed, and Jongor never came. Her hope died. . . .

THE sacrifice to the sun would be made at high noon. The night before the day of the sacrifice fell. Ann's last night on Earth! Tomorrow she must die!

There was the sound of revelry in the city. There was a great feast somewhere, given by the king, at which Ann Hunter's attendants were preparing her to be exhibited. Hurrying feet passed down the corridor outside. Alcan entered, looked hungrily at her, and hurriedly departed. Ann knew it was hopeless. Wan and pale, she let the attendants bathe and dress her. They signaled it was now time for her to appear before the feast of the king.

She stepped into the corridor, guards in front and behind her. As she neared the banquet chamber the sounds of feasting grew louder.

Suddenly, from the banquet hall, there came the sound of a rifle shot!

The girl's heart leaped into her mouth. A rifle shot! What could it mean? Rifles had been taken away from the three whites when the Murians captured them. The monkey-people had no guns. Who could be firing a rifle here in this lost world?

The gun spoke again, the second shot following quickly on the heels of the first. And then it roared a third time.

There was no mistaking the sound! Somebody was firing a rifle. What did it mean?

Instantly the noise of the banquet was stilled. There was a moment of silence. Then a Murian screamed in a voice harsh with fear. Pandemonium broke loose.

A madly fighting tangle of Murians poured out of the banquet room. At first, Ann thought they were attacking someone. Then she saw they were—fleeing! They were fighting to get out of the room, to get away from something. They poured through the doorway in a screaming flood. Some of them raced down the corridor toward her. Others ran in the opposite direction. They ducked into rooms, raced to the windows and leaped out to the trees growing outside.

Ann Hunter had learned a few words of the Murian tongue. She heard what the fleeing Murians were screaming.

"The king is dead!" they were shouting. "The king has been killed! Thunder came and killed the king!"

SOMEONE had shot the king! Someone, with a rifle, had slipped into the banquet hall, and had killed the king as he feasted! Who could have done it? Had—Ann's heart leaped at the thought—had Jongor somewhere secured a rifle, and had he then slipped in and killed the king in order to free her? Was that possible?

Wild panic surged through the Murian palace. Ann Hunter's guards were caught up in it. They forgot their duties, and fled with their fellows.

The girl crouched against the wall. Out of the throne room, smoking rifle still in his hands, came Richard Varsey!

He had fired the shot. He had killed the king, and saved her life. Richard Varsey, whom she had despised as a weakling and a coward, whom she had not trusted, had somehow managed to escape from the dungeon where he had

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been confined, and securing a rifle had saved her from becoming the bride of the sun!

Ann ran to him.

"Dick! Thank heaven you managed to escape in time! Come on! Let's get away from here before these creatures recover from their panic."

She was so glad to see him that she almost kissed him. The racking tension that had been with her for days began to relax. In spite of herself, she began to cry. But the tears that came into her eyes were tears of pure happiness. She was safe! She would not have to go out under the sun at noonday tomorrow, and yield up her young life on an altar of naked stone before a screaming throng of missing links avid for blood. She was safe!

"Oh, Dick, I'm sorry I didn't trust you! Please forgive me," she begged. "And let's get on our way while we have a chance."

He avoided her eyes. "There's no danger," Varsey said. "When I knocked over their king, the Murians were scared so badly they'll never stop running. We're safe enough."

"How did you manage to escape, Dick? And where's Mr. Hofer?"

"I don't know where Hofer is," he answered evasively. "They separated us soon after you left."

"But how did you get away? I've tried every way to find a chance to escape, but they watched me like hawks."

"I had help," he answered.

"Help? Did Jongor help you? Did he slip into the dungeons and release you?" asked the eager girl.

"No, it wasn't Jongor."

For the first time, she noticed Varsey was not looking at her. And his manner was so evasive that it sent a sudden chill of fright through her.

"Dick!" she questioned. "Is everything all right?"

Before he could answer, a Murian came out of the banquet room. It was Alcan, and his guards were with him. He came rushing toward them. Ann saw him. Her scream rang through the building.

"Dick! They're after us! Shoot them! Quickly!"

Varsey did not lift the rifle.

Alcan came rushing up. His monkey face was flushed with victory.

"Shoot!" Ann hissed.

Varsey did not move.

A chilling premonition struck the girl. Something was wrong, terribly wrong. Varsey's refusal to shoot showed that much. And Alcan's manner showed something else. The Murian was panting with eagerness. And he wasn't looking at Varsey. He was looking at *her!*

He grabbed at her. Ann leaped away.

"Dick, protect me!" she begged.

VARSEY shoved her toward the Murian!

"There she is," he said. "Take her. I told you if you would release me and find my rifle for me, I would shoot the king. Then you could be king. And you could also have the girl. Well, I'm keeping my bargain. Here's the girl."

That was how Varsey had "escaped" and had so easily found a rifle! He had conspired with Alcan to assassinate the Murian king. And as a part of that conspiracy, Alcan was to have Ann Hunter!

"You devil!" she hissed. "You yellow coward!"

Varsey quailed before the fire in her eyes.

"It was the only way to save your life," he muttered.

"To save your own, you mean. You rat! If I had a gun, I'd kill you myself. I'd rather be dead than belong to

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Alcan. Do you hear that? I'd rather be offered as a bride of the sun than belong to the creature you've given me to!"

There was cold, bitter rage in her voice. And fear. Ann had thought she was safe. She had thought Varsey had saved her. And he hadn't. He had betrayed her.

Gobbling hoarse gutturals, Alcan leaped toward her. She doubled up her tiny fist and struck with all her might. The blow struck the Murian right on the tip of his nose. His eyes blinked in startled surprise. He did not know what a fist was. And the blow jarred him. It had all the fury of a betrayed woman behind it. It rocked the Murian back on his heels, lifted him off balance.

He slipped and fell. Before he could regain his feet, Ann Hunter was running down the corridor. She reached the door at the end and vanished into the night. Alcan and his guard charged after her.

DAWN found Ann Hunter miles from the city of the Murians. She had dropped from the wall surrounding the city and had fought her way through a strip of jungle. Death had missed her by inches during the night, death in the form of huge snorting beasts lurking in the jungle. By the first dawn light, she had climbed a rocky, rugged slope that had taken her above the steaming swamp. Now she was on a high ledge overlooking the jungle. She could go no farther without rest.

Panting, she threw herself down at the edge of the ledge. Off to the left, several miles in the distance, she could see the city from which she had escaped, a rugged pile of tumbled masonry gleaming in the light of the rising sun like the bones of a gigantic dead beast.

Ann watched the jungle for signs of pursuit. She had been followed, she knew, but she did not know whether or not she had evaded her pursuers.

Something moved across an open space in the jungle. Her eyes caught it but whether it was a man or an animal, she could not tell. It was going away from the Murian city and stumbling along as if it was almost exhausted. It disappeared from sight.

Whatever it was, it certainly was not following her.

But something was following her. The Murians! She saw at least a dozen of the monkey-men come out of the edge of the jungle, following her tracks like hounds on the trail of wounded prey. Alcan was with them; and Varsey. They discovered where she had climbed the slope. Yelping, they started up.

Wearily, the girl got to her feet. She was on rock now, which would leave no trail for the Murians to follow, unless they were closely enough akin to animals to be able to trail by the scent. She started along the ledge, and stopped, appalled!

Ann could see the monkey-men in the direction she had to go. Two of them were in the air, gliding toward her. Others were on the cliffs. Pterodactyls! Unknowingly she had come to the cliffs inhabited by the lizard-birds. Her escape was cut off. Death waited in front of her, and Alcan followed behind her.

A TIRED, utterly exhausted look came over Ann's face. She had come here seeking her brother, but instead of finding him, she had found—death. Her mind was made up. She did not hesitate, but turned and walked toward the rim of the ledge. Her lips moved in silent prayer. A drop of hundreds of feet loomed below her.

Death was preferable to Alcan. Death was clean. And to find death,

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all she had to do was step from the ledge. Death waited on the rocks below.

When she appeared at the edge of the precipice, the Murians saw her. They howled like hounds eager to be in at the kill, and came scrambling up the slope.

"You'll never get me!" Ann cried. "Never, never!"

She took the last fatal step. Her foot found nothing but air beneath it. She started to fall.

And as she started to fall, she heard gravel crunch on the ledge behind her. The rasp of swiftly running feet came to her ears.

"Girl!" a voice shouted. "Don't do it!"

There was desperate urgency in that voice. Ann twisted her head around. The sight of the person leaping toward her made her scramble to regain her balance. Quite suddenly, she did not want to die.

But it was too late. She was already off balance. She was falling over the edge of the precipice.

Just as she toppled over a sinewy arm went around her. There was strength in that arm, tremendous strength. She felt the corded muscles knot around her waist. There was a moment of mad horror when nothing but air was beneath her. There was a fierce tug of war between the muscles in the arm that held her and the weight of her body.

And the muscles won. They won! They lifted her back to the safety of the ledge.

CHAPTER VIII

The Fight on the Ledge

"GIRL!" said Jongor accusingly. "You were going to jump. If I hadn't prevented, you'd have jumped."

It was Jongor who had come up behind her. Ann Hunter lay in his arms, panting for breath, her head whirling.

"Where—where did you come from? she faltered.

His face was grave. "After I had gone away and left you, I was sorry. I realized you did not know you could trust me. The two men in your party you thought were your friends, but Jongor you did not know. I came back, looking for you. I found where you had camped. Signs on the ground and in the trees told me what had happened. The Muros had caught you. I was coming to rescue you from the Muros when I saw you climb the mountain slope." He smiled gravely at her.

Was he telling the truth? His face, his eyes, the tone of his voice said that he was.

"But why were you trying to rescue me?" she questioned. "Why were you willing to risk your life to save mine?"

He shrugged. There was longing in his face as he answered.

"Because I am lonely," he said. "All my life—since my parents were killed—I have been lonely. I played with the dinos, I fought the teros, I ran from the Muros. I lived in the swamps, I climbed the mountains. I learned to talk to myself, to pretend someone else was with me.

"But there never was anyone. All the time I knew I was pretending. That was why I came for you. I thought it would be nice to talk to you, to play with you. It would be nice to bring you good things to eat, to hear you laugh, to see the sparkle of your eyes. And that," he ended, "was why I came to take you from the Muros—if I could."

In a few simple, direct words he gave the girl a picture that made her heart turn over. She could look back and see a lonely boy in a lost world, a boy

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fighting for his life every hour of the day and night, a boy growing to manhood and becoming a lonely man. That was the supreme curse of this forgotten world—its loneliness!

As a boy, Jongor had never had a playmate; as a youth, he had never had a friend. Now he was a man—a stalwart giant of a man—shut off from the companionship of his own kind. He was lonely still. And in his loneliness he came seeking the only companion he had known since the death of his parents.

Abruptly, Ann kissed him. She hadn't known she was going to do it. She hadn't intended to do it. But she did it just the same.

Jongor looked startled. "What did you do?" he whispered huskily. "What was that?"

"I kissed you, Jongor," Ann answered, a sudden shyness in her voice. "Don't you know what a kiss is?"

"No." He shook his head. "No. I do not know. What is it? What does it mean?"

Tears welled in her eyes but soft laughter bubbled from her lips.

IT was at this moment that the first of the Murians gained the ledge.

Jongor released the girl. He shoved her behind him and to one side. The great bow was slung over his shoulders. He pulled it free and strung it with the same motion. His right hand, leaping back over his shoulder, jerked an arrow from the quiver at his back. The bowstring hummed like a great harp. The arrow leaped outward.

Two of the Murians, fleeter than the others, had gained the ledge. Armed with long throwing spears, they were coming forward, one behind the other.

The first one screamed as the arrow drove into him. So fiercely was the shaft driven that it passed clear through the first Murian and drove up to its feathered tip into the body of the creature behind. Only the mighty muscles of Jongor could have bent the bow that launched that arrow.

Shouts of rage came from the Murians on the slope when they saw the first two of their comrades die. Shrill commands from Alcan urged them forward. Alcan and Varsey were bringing up the rear. The latter had his rifle.

"Shouldn't we run while we have a chance?" Ann Hunter said nervously, seeing Varsey and the gun he carried.

"We can't run," Jongor answered. "I could jump down the cliffs to this ledge, but even I can't jump back up again. And there is another reason why we can't run." He gestured back over his shoulder.

The girl saw what he meant. Pterodactyls! They were gliding along the cliffs, lighting, climbing up, and gliding forward again. If she and Jongor attempted to flee, they would run right into the advancing lizard-birds.

"We'll fight," said Jongor. "It is our only chance."

The Murians poured over the ledge in a screaming flood. Fortunately, they were armed only with spears and knives. The weapon that launched the "shaking death"—which the girl knew they must possess—was apparently not portable, for the Murians did not have it with them. But they outnumbered Jongor at least fifteen to one.

Jongor's face was drawn into a fighting snarl. The gray crystal that he wore on his left wrist—the crystal that enabled him to control the dinosaurs—glittered in the sunlight each time the great bow hummed. Arrows, moving so rapidly they were mere flickering points of light, leaped toward the Murians.

Spears were hurled back. Jongor dodged them with all the agility of a

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toreador evading the charges of a maddened bull. Each time a spear came toward him, he swayed his body to the right or the left, never moving out of his tracks.

Ann Hunter gasped in admiration as Jongor dodged the spears. She was seeing an exhibition of bravery that left her breathless. Death rode on those spear points, but the giant merely shifted his body like a dancer as each javelin sang toward him. A grim smile played over his face.

"Come and get me, you cowardly Muros!" his challenge rang out. "Come, you with the tails, and fight a man!"

Arrows leaped into the charging Murians, struck with sodden crunches. The missing links were going down. Jongor was winning, Ann Hunter saw. He was winning! His great bow and fearless spirit were more than a match for the animal humans attacking him. He was winning! Her heart leaped at the thought.

Then—a rifle thundered. A bullet whanged hard into a solid object. The girl's heart leaped up into her mouth. Jongor could dodge spears, but he could not dodge bullets. He had been hit. The way the bullet had crunched meant that it had struck something.

Then she saw what it had hit. Not Jongor. Jongor's bow! Just as one of her shots had struck a drawn bow in the fight with the natives, so Varsey's shot had hit Jongor's great bow, had splintered it into useless fragments.

The giant was weaponless. His bow was ruined. But at least he was unharmed.

SCREECHING, the Murians charged. Ann Hunter saw Jongor fling the useless bow aside, and leap backward.

Her heart jumped into her throat with a terrible thought.

But Jongor wasn't running away. Ann saw him leap backward and grab from the ledge one of the spears that he had so successfully dodged.

He hurled it with all his strength—not at the Murians, but over their heads at Varsey, at the man with the rifle.

It was exceedingly quick thinking on Jongor's part. Another shot from the rifle might easily put an abrupt end to the fight. Therefore—get the man with the gun.

Varsey saw the spear coming. He tried to dodge but he did not have Jongor's keenly attuned muscles. The spear did not strike him in the chest, which was where Jongor had intended it to hit. It struck him instead in the shoulder—and the keen edge of the blade almost cut his arm off. He dropped the rifle. It went over the ledge toward the rocks below. Varsey, screaming and soaked with blood, was out of the fight.

Jongor faced Alcan and five of his guards now. Only one Murian had retained his spear. The other javelins had all been cast at the bronzed young giant. The Murian with the spear did not try to hurl it. He was too close to his target for that. Instead, he jabbed with it—straight at Jongor's heart.

Ann Hunter stifled a scream as she saw the Murian drive the spear at Jongor. She saw the giant reach out one hand, as though he intended trying to deflect the keen point of the blade with his palm. She knew he couldn't do it. The point would go right through his hand. Trying to stop a driven spear like that was like throwing up one hand to catch a bullet—impossible.

But Jongor didn't try to catch the blade. His hand, darting with the lightning speed of a striking snake, went under the point and grasped the shaft. Jongor swayed to one side, simultaneously yanking the shaft — and

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the Murian who had hold of it—toward him. His fist leaped out, caught the monkey-man right where his chin would have been if he had had a chin. The blow did not seem to have been struck hard, but the crack of the Murian's spine as his neck snapped was fatal.

"Come on, you stupid ones with the tails, and get me!" Jongor jeered.

He didn't wait for the Murians to accept his invitation. Instead he waded in. One mighty knee came up. The shaft of the spear he had taken from the Murian snapped over it. At close quarters the spear was too long to use. By breaking it in two, Jongor made it into a very effective club.

Ann Hunter watched that fight with bated breath, knowing only too well how much it meant to her. Jongor loomed above the squatty Murians like the giant that he was. Ann saw him swing the broken spear, knocking the tailed horrors right and left. She saw them go down, or turn tail and run, all but Alcan, who had remained in the rear. Alcan was not paying much attention to the fight. Instead he was looking up with quick nervous glances.

Ann did not know what the Murian was looking for until the flapping creak of leathery wings jerked her own eyes upward. Then she saw it. One of the teros had arrived! It was circling above them, as though undecided which of the possible victims it should attack.

"Jongor!" she screamed. *"A tero! Watch out!"*

Alcan turned to run. Jongor glanced upward, saw the careening lizard-bird. He made no effort to escape. Instead he ran after the fleeing Alcan.

"It will get you, Jongor!" Ann Hunter called fiercely.

HE ignored her. As he leaped toward the fleeing Murian she saw another of the bird-lizards glide into view. Two of them! They were settling lower. And Jongor persisted in chasing Alcan as though he did not realize the danger that was overhead.

Trembling, the girl crouched back against the face of the cliff. Death was in the air. Death was coming closer every passing second. She could not fight the pterodactyls. Their fierce beaks and clawed wings would slash her almost instantly to pieces. Even Jongor could not fight them without weapons. The tooth-jawed vultures would tear his mighty muscles to shreds, his whole body to a bloody caricature.

But he wasn't trying to fight them. He was chasing Alcan. Had he lost his senses? Had he been injured in the fight? Had he become so angry that the only thought in his mind was to destroy Alcan?

Ann saw him overtake Alcan, saw the two pterodactyls swoop toward the struggling pair. And Jongor ignored them! Instead he fiercely shook the Murian into senselessness. Then the girl saw him snatch something from Alcan's arm.

She saw death dive toward him with open beak, with clawed wings and talons open to rend and tear.

"This is the end," she thought. "This is the end. He can't escape! He doesn't have a chance in the world of escaping."

Jongor whirled. He looked up toward the diving teros. He didn't try to fight them.

The bird-lizards swerved abruptly. They checked their flight. Suddenly they seemed to go blind. They acted as if they no longer saw the figure standing there on the ledge under them. They swerved outward, glided over the rim of the ledge and, circling, settled downward.

Jongor ran to the girl. He held up the object he had taken from Alcan. It

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was a glittering crystal, much like the crystal he wore on his arm, but smaller, and of a slightly different color.

"Just as my crystal controls the dinos, this crystal controls the teros," he pantingly explained. "Alcan had it. He was using it to call the teros. That was why I had to take it away from him. If I hadn't, he would have hidden in the jungle and called hundreds of teros to us. When I took it away from him, I used it to send the teros away. With it I can send them several miles away, which is the limit of its range."

Jongor caught the girl as she fainted from pure relief.

CHAPTER IX

Escape

"YES," said Jongor slowly. "I will take you away from Lost Land. We will cross the jungle and the mountains. If the Blackfellows are waiting for us, we will try to evade them. And we will cross the desert, somehow. I am anxious to see the world from which you came, the world of which my father and mother told me."

There was a faraway look in his eyes as he finished speaking. Overhead the sunlight filtered through the leaves of the trees. They had left the mountains and entered the jungle. Jongor, for some obscure reason, had insisted they were safer among the trees than they were in the hills.

The girl was resting. The wild flight away from the city of the Murians had exhausted her strength, and she had to rest. Jongor leaned on a spear he had taken from the Murians and watched her. She was eating fruit that he had brought her.

Ann Hunter smiled. Most of the tension had gone from her face, and all of the fear had gone from her eyes. She was no longer afraid of Jongor. And when he was with her, she was not afraid of anything else.

Now he was going to take her home. Home! The word was a bell ringing in her mind. How badly she wanted to go home, she had not known until now. There was only one drawback. She had come here seeking her brother Alan. She had not found him. She had found no sign of him. The only logical conclusion was that he was dead.

"We must start as soon as you are strong enough," Jongor said. "It is a long journey and will take months."

"I'm ready now," the girl answered, getting to her feet.

Side by side, they started through the jungle. It was day and the beasts that hunt by night were not alert. But in spite of that, there was danger in this wilderness, danger from poison fang and suddenly awakened beast of prey. But this was Jongor's land and he knew how to cross it in safety.

Fascinated, the girl watched him. When he stepped, his footfall did not give forth the slightest sound. His keen eyes canvassed every thicket for danger. Nothing moved in the green tangle that he did not see.

Suddenly Jongor stopped, his gaze fixed on a growth of reedy plants beside a water hole.

"What is it?" Ann whispered.

"Sh!" he answered. "Something is hiding in the reeds."

The girl followed the line of his pointing hand. She could see nothing. The growth of reeds looked exactly like hundreds of other growths. There was no wind and the leaves hung motionless.

"Walk behind me," Jongor whispered. "Make no sound. Something is hiding there that does not belong in the jungle. It is trying to be quiet."

Jongor moved forward, his spear ready for throwing. If he had moved silently before, he was twice as quiet

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now. His eyes were fixed with alert intentness on the clump of reeds where something was hiding.

"Come out of there!" said Jongor suddenly.

Ann Hunter felt a constricting band of fear close around her heart. For a second the reeds did not move. Then they quivered. Something literally exploded out of them. At first Ann thought it was an animal. Then she saw it was a man.

Or it had been a man. It was a walking scarecrow now, with every rib showing. A dirt-clotted beard covered its face. It stared at them from haggard eyes.

"My God!" it croaked. "Ann!"

THE girl heard the words. They were spoken in a voice she had never expected to hear again, but it was a voice that sent her heart pounding feverishly. The scarecrow staggered toward them. Jongor lowered his spear point. The girl leaped around him—straight into the arms of the man.

"Alan!" she sobbed. "My brother!"

The scarecrow was Alan Hunter, Ann's twin, whom she had come to Lost Land seeking. Now she had found him. He was a trembling wreck of a man, with barely enough strength left to stand, but Ann had found him. That was all that mattered. She must have seen him from the cliff that morning, she realized, without recognizing him. She had seen something moving through the jungle away from the Murian city, but she had been unable to tell whether it was a man or an animal.

It hadn't been an animal. It had been Alan Hunter. Now Ann and Alan and Jongor could leave Lost Land forever. This mad adventure was over. The end had come; a happy ending.

It was the happiest moment of Ann Hunter's life.

"This is what happened," Alan Hunter said bitterly. "Varsey and I got to Lost Land all right, with nothing but our rifles left. Varsey's guts gave out and he wouldn't enter the valley. He stayed in the mountain pass while I entered. By pure blind luck, I managed to cross the valley and find the Murian city. I entered the place at night and stumbled right straight into their treasure rooms.

"Talk about treasure! Why, there's enough diamonds to load down an elephant! Gold bars stacked as high as a man's head. This city must originally have been a colony of miners. Their descendants have been working the mines ever since the motherland sank, and having no way to dispose of their wealth now, it has just piled up.

"Naturally, I filled my pockets. Then I got out of there. The Murians never did discover me. I returned to the place where Varsey waited and showed him the jewels I had hooked. That was a mistake. It damned near cost me my life," he recalled angrily.

"What happened?" the girl insisted.

"What do you suppose happened? Varsey waited until night and then he jumped me. He put a bullet in me, but he didn't kill me. But I fixed him. I slung the diamonds into a ravine that nobody could get out of, if he ever got into it. Varsey howled like a kicked pup when I did it. Those diamonds were what he wanted, but he wasn't going to have them if I could help it. When he saw they were gone, he headed back toward civilization, leaving me for dead."

Ann Hunter shuddered. She saw how horribly she had been tricked.

"He told me you were a captive of the natives," the girl whispered. "All he really wanted was for me to finance another expedition back to Lost Land. He knew there were more diamonds

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where the first had come from."

"He played you for a sucker, Sis," Alan Hunter said. "And damn him, if I ever get my hands on him, he'll pay for what he did to both of us!"

"He left me for dead," the young explorer continued. "And I damned near was dead. When I regained consciousness the next day, Varsey was gone and a giant in a leopard skin was squatting over me. At first I thought I was delirious. Then I saw the giant was real."

HUNTER gestured toward Jongor who stood leaning on his spear.

"There's the man who saved my life," he said. "Jongor! He brought me water and food, and I sent him after Varsey. You tell what happened after that, Jongor."

"I took up the trail," Jongor said. "But Varsey saw me coming, and he must have guessed that I was after him. He fled into the desert, and I let him go, thinking that the desert would exact full payment for the debt that he owed."

"Then you knew all the time that Varsey had tried to kill my brother," Ann Hunter challenged. "Why didn't you tell me? Why didn't you warn me?"

"I tried to do so," Jongor answered. "You would not listen."

"I'm sorry," the girl faltered. "I was a fool. But I didn't know."

"Hah!" said Alan Hunter. "Sis, if you're willing to admit that you were ever a fool, you've come a long way from the high-toned society girl you used to be."

Ann colored. "Perhaps I have," she answered evenly.

"When I returned to the place where I had left your brother, he was gone," Jongor continued. "The signs showed that the Muros had come in their airship and taken him away. I did not look for him; for what the Muros take, they usually kill. If I had known he was locked up in the dungeons of the Muros, I would have tried to rescue him. But I did not know."

"It wasn't your fault you didn't try to help me," said the haggard youth. "The Murians locked me up and forgot about me. They wanted a girl to be the bride of the sun, but naturally they couldn't use me. Now and then my jailers remembered enough about me to bring me food and water. I thought I was doomed. But there was a hell of a fracas in their city last night, and in the confusion, I escaped."

Ann Hunter explained the cause of that confusion.

"Varsey again!" the youth raged. "So he traded you to Alcan. If that devil is still alive, I'm not leaving this valley until I settle accounts with him!"

"I think you need not worry," Jongor interposed. "Alcan had a very frail neck. Somehow it broke almost as soon as I touched him. As for Varsey, he is badly wounded. The jungle will take care of him."

Alan Hunter smiled grimly. He knew how "frail" Alcan's neck was, and he could easily visualize how it had happened to break as soon as Jongor "touched" the Murian.

"Good for you," the youth grinned. "You paid off a debt for me."

"It was my debt too," Jongor said. The youth looked curiously at him but did not ask for an explanation.

"I move," the youth suggested, "that we get to hell out of here as fast as we can. I've seen enough of this country to last me the rest of my life. Jongor, Ann and I are wealthy. If you will come with us, I will see that you are well rewarded."

"I am not interested in a reward," the giant answered.

"But you'll come," Ann Hunter said

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quickly. "You said you would."

Jongor looked at her. She faced his gaze.

"I'll go with you," he said simply, but there was a glow in his eyes.

Alan Hunter saw the look that passed between them.

"So that's the way it is," he said happily. "Sis, old girl, you've picked a man who *is* a man! I didn't think you had it in you."

"Alan! Shut up!" The girl blushed furiously.

Her brother grinned in reply.

"Whether you like it or not," he said, "I'm going to be best man."

"Best man?" Jongor queried. "What is that?"

"Oh, don't pay any attention to him! He's—he's just a pest," Ann blurted, a picture of rosy-cheeked confusion.

OVERHEAD the sun climbed up to noon and then slanted down the western sky. The three traveled slowly, Jongor reducing his speed to that of the girl and the youth. Ann Hunter was excited and happy. She had found her brother. And each time she looked at Jongor, she knew she had found something else. They were going home. Home! Nothing could stop them now. Nothing! With a gray-eyed jungle giant to fight for them, even the Blackfellows would not dare interfere.

And then, in the middle of the afternoon, in a glade between the swamps and the hills, the voice came whispering.

"Stop!" the voice said. "Stop."

Jongor flung up his head like a lion scenting the presence of danger. And like the lion, his teeth were suddenly bared in a fighting snarl.

"The voice from the air," he said huskily. "It is talking to us."

"It's speaking English!" Ann Hunter gasped. "Before, it talked the language of the Blackfellows, but now it's speaking English!"

It came from nowhere and from everywhere. It was a chilling, blood-curdling whisper, emanating from the air. And it was speaking in English!

"Halt," it said. "Ann Hunter, halt! You, Jongor—halt. Do not move."

Alan Hunter knew what was happening.

"That voice-from-the-air business is part of the science of the old Murians," he said rapidly. "They developed a method of seeing at a distance that is similar to television, except that they need no transmitter to send the scenes to them. They use what looks like a large crystal ball—

"Hell, I wonder if that is the source of the belief in the crystal ball! I wonder if that legend came down through the centuries from ancient Mu. Golly, I never thought of that before! But no matter. With that crystal ball, they can see anything that is happening in and near Lost Land. They can see us and talk to us.

"I don't know how they work it; never had a chance to find out. But cripes, it doesn't make any difference if they *can* see us! Not that they can do anything to us. We're too far away. They could use the voice to tell the natives to attack, but there aren't any natives here to jump us.

"They're bluffing. We can tell 'em to go to hell. They can't touch us. But I never knew the Murians could speak English," Alan Hunter finished apprehensively.

"Hah!" the voice said.

"Golly!" Alan Hunter gasped. "They can hear us too."

"Of course I can hear you," the voice continued. "And you must stop. You must return the girl to the Murian city."

Then Ann Hunter recognized the

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voice and realized why it had spoken to them in English.

"That's Hofer," she breathed in relief. "My guide," she added for her brother's benefit. "It's all right. He must have found his way to the Murian laboratory, must have discovered how to use the things they have. Hofer is all right. He wouldn't try to harm us. He must want us to return to the city so we can all rest up and leave this horrible country together."

Ann's relief was pathetic. The weird voice speaking from the air, even if she had heard it before, was terribly frightening. But now her brother knew how the voice transmission was effected, which removed all the uncanny weirdness from the act. And Hofer, instead of the Murians, was speaking to them.

In Ann's mind there rose up a picture of Hofer, that man of iron nerves and relentless purpose. She remembered Hofer coolly following the flight of the pterodactyl with his rifle, waiting until he was certain of his shot, ignoring the death that was diving toward him. She remembered Hofer when the natives attacked, firing as methodically as if he had been at target practice. Hofer had stood by her, Ann Hunter recalled, when she insisted on entering Lost Land.

"Yes," the voice said, in a tone that showed both satisfaction and anxiety at the same time. "You must return here. Then we will all leave together, after we have rested. But you must not continue farther. There is death ahead of you—an ambush. I can see what you cannot see."

HOFER was protecting them, helping them. They had forgotten him, had left him in the Murian city, but he was still trying to help them.

"Of course we'll return," the girl said eagerly. "We'll start immediately."

She looked at Jongor and at her brother for confirmation. Jongor's smooth bronzed face showed absolutely nothing. His gray eyes were fathomless. He was holding the spear ready for action. He only glanced at Ann. His eyes were roving the jungle. There was a curious, strained alertness about him.

A moment later Ann's eyes grew wide. For on the face of her brother she read incredulous horror.

"Was *Hofer* your guide!" he gasped.

"Yes. What do you mean? Is there something wrong with him? He seemed all right to me."

"Everything is wrong with him!" Alan Hunter groaned. "He was my guide too. I was warned not to take him, but I paid no attention to that warning. He got the fever and I had to send him back with an escort of carriers. That was one of the luckiest things that ever happened to me, for in his fever ravings I learned what he really is.

"The man is an anarchist! On top of that, he is hopelessly insane, but is clever enough to hide it. He's a mad anarchist, sworn to the destruction of all forms of government.*

"Somewhere or other Hofer must have picked up a clue to the existence of Lost Land. He has spent the past fifteen years trying to find his way here. He's never been able to manage it, because no one was willing to finance an expedition for him, until we came along.

"Oh, Lord!" young Hunter groaned.

*The past century or so has seen the rise and fall of anarchism as a political faith. Anarchism does not believe in the structure of modern governments, is against governmental organization and compulsion. Advocates of the theory have more often than not been fanatics, even assassins.

Obviously Hofer is more of a madman than a political revolutionary—anarchism being the most absolute form of revolution yet preached. As a mad anarchist, his frantic efforts to gain control of the Murian vortex are entirely logical and in keeping with his deranged mentality.—Ed.

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"Ann, believe me. He and Varsey got together and played you for a sucker. Hofer would have given his life to get into this valley, *because he wants the weapons of the Murians. He intends to use them to overthrow all the governments on Earth.* And now he has the weapons he has spent years trying to get!"

Her brother's words were hammers of doom pounding in Ann Hunter's mind. She saw how completely she had been tricked, how Varsey and Hofer had used her for their own devilish purposes. She remembered the hidden energy that had seemed to possess Hofer, how he had forced himself forward relentlessly. At last she understood the hidden urge that drove him: He wanted to find the long-lost Murian city, to obtain the terrible weapons of this vanished race!

Hofer was a traitor not only to Ann Hunter but to all humanity, to all civilization!

"He's trying to get us back into his power," Alan Hunter said. "He's trying to trick us again. But we know what he is, and we won't go back. We'll get out of here, and come back with an army—"

A burst of raucous laughter came from the air.

"You think you can escape me!" Hofer's voice snarled from nothingness. "You think you will get away, and send back bombing planes! Hah! You miserable slaves of pluto-democracy! I will show you whether or not you will escape from Hofer!"

"What does he mean?" the girl whispered.

"He means—*that!*" Jongor whispered, pointing.

The sound was already audible, a humming drone. Coming into existence in the little glade where they stood was —the vortex of the "shaking death"!

Already bits of soil, leaves and dead twigs were swirling into the air.

CHAPTER X

The Charge of the Dinos

HOFER had gained control of the "shaking death." He could see his victims. No matter where they fled, he could send the frightful whirling vortex after them.*

Ann Hunter screamed. Her brother stood, pale and distraught, gazing with frightened eyes at the glinting mist swirling in a growing whirlpool around them.

Jongor acted. Instantaneously. He caught the girl around the waist, the bearded youth by an arm, and leaped toward the edge of the vortex. Rising wind currents smote at him. Cyclonic bursts of air buffeted him to one side. Air, if moving with sufficient speed, can seem as solid as stone. And this was the same kind of fearful whirlpool that drives wheat straws through solid oak boards. This was a tornado, artificially created.

Jongor fought against it. The great muscles of his legs, muscles that he had developed during the long years when

*To what extent the mechanical ingenuity of the people of Mu asserted itself, we may never know for a certainty. But being an intelligent race, a race of builders and colonizers, it may be that their knowledge of artificially controlling air currents far transcends any discoveries yet made by the races that came after them.

It was only a hundred years ago that Matthew Fontaine Maury began his great researches which led to the founding of modern meteorology—weather forecasting. And even today, weather predictions are still one of the amusing uncertainties of everyday life.

Who knows but what the ancient races of Mu and Atlantis, and perhaps other civilizations whose records have been obliterated by time, made original discoveries in electricity, astronomy, meteorology and engineering—how were the monuments on Easter Island erected?—which surpassed any findings subsequently brought to light by their later descendants.—Ed.

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he had had to run to live, strained against the fury of the rising air. He felt the vortex begin to lift him. His weight began to lessen. Alan Hunter, who weighed far less than Jongor, was flung upward. The giant fought to drag him down. At the same time he fought to reach the edge of the screaming pool of air.

The vortex was growing. The currents were moving faster, whirling more violently. The sound was becoming a thunderous roar. Above the roar, Jongor thought he could hear Hofer's screams of wild laughter.

"That will fix you, you savage!" Hofer was screaming. "And that will fix you too, you snooty society girl! And that idle wastrel who is your brother, this will fix him, too! Hah, hah, hah! Die, damn you, die!"

Jongor drove his muscles to the last fierce erg of their energy. And the vortex held him! He strained forward. The air currents caught him and threw him back. He fought as he had never fought before. There was a girl in his arms. He must save her. But he couldn't save her! Strong as he was, the vortex was stronger. And growing stronger still. It was threatening to lift him clear off the ground.

Around him the soil was whirling upward. Small trees were being uprooted and flung toward the sky. He knew if once he was borne aloft, he would never come down again, except as torn, mutilated flesh.

Releasing the girl, he dropped to the ground.

"Grab my belt!" he yelled to the two. "Hang on tight! I'm going to crawl!"

And crawl he did. He felt Ann's and Alan's fingers tighten in the tough skin belt that he wore. Digging hands and knees and feet into the ground, he began to crawl. It would have been fatal to walk erect. The currents were too strong. In less than seconds they would have swept him off his feet.

But down next to the ground, the howling vortex did not as yet have quite so strong a grip. For what seemed an eternity to him, Jongor did not know whether he was going to win or lose.

Then he reached the edge of the vortex. Dragging the girl and the youth with him, he leaped out of the circle of whirling air.

"Hah!" Hofer shrieked. "So you have come out of the grasp of the 'shaking death'! And you still think you will escape! Hah!"

Jongor ran as he had never run before. Behind him the vortex lumbered into motion. It began to follow him. It did not move very fast. Alone he could have outdistanced it. But he was carrying Ann Hunter in his arms and trying to help her brother at the same time.

He plunged through swamp pools, he crossed slow-moving streams, he fought his way through the tangle of creeper vines. Blood appeared on his legs where the briars cruelly tore him. Sweat began to glisten on his body. His great chest began to heave.

FINALLY, in the center of a heavy forest, he found shelter. The trees hid them from the sight of Hofer. They heard the vortex go roaring past.

"He's lost us!" Alan Hunter panted.

"I doubt it," Jongor breathed. "True, he has missed us this time, but he will not quit trying. Our only chance is that we may escape until night comes. Then, if we can make the mountain pass before morning, we may be out of danger."

"We've got to escape," the youth said desperately. "I'm not thinking of our own lives, either. We can die, and the world will take little account. But Hofer is an anarchist. He hates all

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forms of government. If he learns how to build that vortex—and he *will* learn, you can bet!—he'll leave Lost Land. He'll go to America, and suddenly a very mysterious tornado will strike Washington, D. C. It will destroy the Capitol.

"That will be serious, but it will be as nothing compared to what will follow. He'll turn those vortices loose on every capital in the world. A series of tremendous tornadoes will strike London, Berlin, Rome, Tokyo. Every government in the world will be blown off the map. Hofer has the weapon to do it. The 'shaking death' of the Murians is just exactly what he wants. That's why we've got to escape!"

Jongor listened. The cities that Alan Hunter mentioned were only names to him. He knew nothing of them. Nor did he know the meaning of government or of civilization. But he saw the fierce earnestness of the youth facing him. Gravely he answered,

"We'll escape—somehow."

Remaining out of sight they heard the vortex roar across Lost Land, heard it come back, cross and crisscross the huge valley searching for them.

They didn't wait for night to start out toward the pass that led out of the valley. Taking advantage of every bit of cover, they began moving toward the distant mountain trail that would take them to freedom.

They came to a gap in the trees from which the knife gash that marked the the trail was visible. Jongor pointed toward it.

"The pass is miles away, but we must reach it before morning," he said.

There, in that narrow passage in the mountains, was safety. For Jongor, it was the beginning of the trail to the world he had never known. It was the return to the land of his father, the land that he knew was terribly menaced by the fanatic back there in the city of the Murians.

He looked at the distant pass. His outstretched arm froze. Horror leaped into his eyes.

"The pass is blocked!" he snarled. "The shaking death is in the pass."

Hofer had set the vortex directly in the narrow passage. He had blocked their escape. They were trapped. *Trapped!* They could see boulders, tree limbs, whole trees even, rising into the air.

"Isn't there another way out of this valley?" Ann Hunter cried.

"No," Jongor answered. "That is the only pass in or out of Lost Land. And it is blocked."

His face looked as though it had been chiseled out of granite.

"Isn't there anything we can do?" Alan Hunter pleaded. "We've got to do something. We simply can't fail!"

Jongor shook his head. "I know of but one thing that will save us now," he said. "It's a desperate chance."

His eyes roved around the jungle as if he were looking for something. Behind them, the vortex roared as it rumbled across the valley. To the left, another tornado had come into being and was reaching upward to the heavens in the form of a gigantic inverted black cone. Two vortices! And another was forming. Hofer was taking no chances. He would sweep all life out of the valley in order to destroy the three humans who menaced him.

"One thing we can do," Jongor said. "As soon as night comes, we will try it."

"What is it?" Alan Hunter asked.

He told them what it was. Their faces paled as they listened.

DAWN was in the air. Hofer leaned from a window erected by the long-gone Murian scientists. The moon

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was setting. It gave off enough light to show the vague outline of the huge valley below him.

"Hah!" he gloated, shaking his fist. "That has done it."

Beyond the wall that circled the city were eight huge vortices.

One was raging in the mountain pass miles away. Others were sweeping like gigantic scythes back and forth across the valley.

Hofer turned back into the power room, made a quick adjustment of the intricate instruments assembled there.

"Ho, Varsey," he said to the man in the room with him. "They're dead. Do you hear that? They're dead! Not a chance is there that they have escaped."

Varsey's arm was in a sling. His face was bloodless.

"Hurry up and make certain they're finished," he said. "Then let's grab all the jewels we can carry and start getting out of this place! It gives me the creeps!"

"Yes," said Hofer, cannily studying the man in the room with him. "Take a look from the window on the other side and see if any Murians are around."

"They beat it long ago," Varsey protested. "No use looking."

"Just to make sure," Hofer insisted.

Varsey moved to the window Hofer had indicated. As he turned his back, the guide snatched a rifle leaning against the wall. He took careful aim and sent the bullet crashing between Varsey's shoulder blades. Without a sound, Varsey collapsed to the floor. He writhed once, and was still.

Hofer viciously kicked the dead body.

"You were a coward and a weakling," he spat contemptuously. "If I had taken you back, you would have betrayed me, just as you betrayed that girl. No one will ever betray *me*, Varsey! The whole earth will tremble before me! When I loose the vortex of the 'shaking death', no man will be able to stand against me. Do you hear that, Varsey? I shall be king of the world! Do you hear me, Varsey?"

Varsey did not move. A little stream of blood rilled from between his shoulder blades and spread over the cold stone floor.

Somewhere in the laboratory an instrument howled. Hofer adjusted it. Then he turned again to the window and looked down over the valley, where the vortices swept like scythes across the jungle.

Gone was the stolid, unemotional guide. Hofer was alive with passion now. The tortuous depths of his dark mind spewed over his face in a gloating grin. The mad anarchist stood at the top of his distorted world. Down below him he saw all his dreams of destruction coming true.

Suddenly his grin became fixed. A glassiness crept into his eyes.

Around the city there was a protecting wall. Beyond that wall, in the gray half light that comes before the dawn, he saw something moving. It was coming straight toward the wall. As he watched, it shoved the wall down, and plodded over it.

Hofer's grin of triumph was changed into a distorted mask of fear as he saw what was happening.

CHAPTER XI

The Wages of Hate

"FASTER, little one," Jongor yelled at the top of his voice. "Push the wall down. Shove it to one side. It was made to stop you, but it was made many centuries ago and has grown weak. You are strong. Push the wall

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down. *Push,* little one; push as you have never pushed before. Push, thou cousin of the snake, thou great overgrown chunk of worm food. *Push!"*

The dinosaur grunted like a straining mule. It dug its hoofs into the ground, set its powerful tail to secure all possible leverage. And it *pushed!* Tons of muscle strained. Giant tendons creaked. Horny head plates cracked as the beast shoved against the wall.

And the stones gave. They began to slide over each other!

"Push!" Jongor roared. "Get the lead out of your miserable carcass, and *push!"*

The dino "pushed." With a thunderous crash the wall collapsed.

"Through the opening," Jongor commanded. "Through it, and into the city, you lumbering rascal. Move, I say!"

The dino drove through the break in the wall. Behind it—behind it came a score of others!

This was Jongor's plan: to find the dinosaurs and bring them near the city. With the crystal he wore on his arm—the crystal that some Murian official had lost in the valley and Jongor had found—he could control not only one but many of the lumbering beasts. All during the night, dodging the sweeping vortices of the "shaking death," he and his two companions had rounded up the dinos.

Now he and Ann and Alan Hunter rode the first one. And the others, caught in the thought-impulses transmitted from the crystal, followed blindly behind. They did not know what they were doing. They only knew an imperative command came to them, a command they had to obey. And they obeyed. A thundering herd, they charged into the city of the Murians.

"He's in the building with the domed top!" Alan Hunter shrieked. "We'll have to tear it down to get him out!"

"We'll get him!" said Jongor grimly. "Move, my little cabbage, move!"

The dino swung toward the structure Alan Hunter had indicated.

Jongor knew how close a race they were running with death. If Hofer had time to set another vortex going, even the charge of the dinosaurs could not break through.

And the vortex was starting! Jongor saw the first mist swirls swing in a giant circle, felt the howling thrusts of the first battering winds.

"Faster!" he roared, shaking the spear that he carried toward the building where Hofer hid. "Faster, thou worthless cockroach of the swamps!"

The vortex began to roar.

The dawn was suddenly hideous with blasts of sound. The squealing roars of the dinosaurs, the thunder of their feet, the howl of the gyrating vortex of wind, all combined into a cyclonic horror that shook the very earth. The Murians, long since fled, huddled together and told each other that the world assuredly was coming to an end.

Jongor saw and felt the rising vortex. He urged the dino forward; begged it, coaxed it, pleaded with it, swore at it. And it responded! Gathering its great muscles, it hurled itself into the careening winds.

If they could get close to the building which housed the machinery that created the vortex, they would be safe. Hofer would not dare bring a vortex in upon himself. But could they get there in time?

The dinos swept down the main street in a thundering flood. Some of them took other avenues. They leaped over fallen columns, floundered over stone from buildings that had collapsed.

Dust was rising into the air, sucked upward by the vortex. Small stones, sand, were going upward. Then larger

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stones. Then Jongor saw, off to the right, one of his faithful dinos rise into the air. It sailed overhead, kicking and floundering in bellowing confusion.

JONGOR knew they had to get through in moments, or they would be crushed to a pulp.

"Faster!" he whispered. "Oh, little one, if you love me, move faster!"

The "little one" put on a prodigious spurt. And that spurt carried it and its riders through the vortex, right up to the domed building where Hofer had taken mad refuge!

"We've got him licked!" Alan Hunter yelled. "We're through!"

"Not yet," Jongor answered grimly.

As if in answer, a rifle spoke from the window. The bullet screamed past the giant's face. He ducked.

"Through the arch, little one," he commanded. "Into the building!"

The dino charged. Its huge flanks scraped on the sides of the arch, so that its riders were in imminent danger of being crushed.

"Inside!" Jongor commanded.

The dinosaur grunted. Falling stones rained around it. It grunted again, and crashed through—into the power room and laboratory of the Murians, the seat of operations from which Hofer directed the "shaking death."

But Hofer was no longer there.

"He's escaped!" Alan Hunter groaned. "He's gotten away!"

Jongor's swift glance swept the room. He saw the humming machinery, knew that this was the place. Besides the rifle shot had come from this huge room. But Hofer was nowhere to be seen—

"There he is!" Ann Hunter shouted, pointing out the window.

Jongor took one look through the window, and even his stout heart threatened to fail. Emerging from another building was—the airship of the Murians! Hofer was at the controls, struggling to get the ship out of the hangar.

He had eluded his pursuers. They had blasted him from the laboratory, but he had escaped to the ship. The vessel, the last relic of those curious flying ships built by the Murians, would not rise very high in the air.

It would not rise high enough to fly over the mountains and out of Lost Land; but if Hofer could get it into the air, he could pick the helpless trio off one by one with his deadly rifle. They would have no chance to escape. The guide could hunt them down at his leisure.

Jongor leaped from the back of the dinosaur. He hurled himself through the window, and when he hit the ground, he was running. Straight at the moving ship he sped, covering the ground in giant strides.

Hofer saw him coming. He released the controls and reached for his rifle, kicking open the door so he could fire out.

Jongor launched the spear. With all the strength in his mighty muscles, he hurled it. Straight as an arrow from his great bow, it sped through the open door, and into and through Hofer's evil heart.

A startled expression appeared in the guide's eyes. The rifle fell from nerveless fingers. He reached up and tried to pluck the spear from his chest. A cough husked on his lips, a spray of blood frothed outward. He started to fall but he was dead before he reached the floor.

The airship settled back to the ground. . . .

"NOW we will leave," said Jongor. "We will go to your world."

"It's your world too," Ann said.

(Concluded on page 133)

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OSCAR, DETECTIVE OF MARS

BY JAMES NORMAN

THEN Hodar the Magician did something which he himself couldn't explain. It violated all the rules of the theater; it was contrary to the etiquette of his colorful profession —but he couldn't control it!

For fifty minutes he had exposed the blasé New York audience to every trick and illusion in his repertoire. Autos packed with chorus girls disappeared from the stage; spirits spoke, minds were read. The final climax was when Bambi, the half-ton elephant, vanished from the stage in a burst of livid green flame and instantly reappeared in the aisles of the upper balcony.

There had been a scattering of polite, bored applause.

Two steps brought Hodar to the edge of the footlights. He was tall and well poised. His spirits, however, weren't as calm as his appearance.

"What's wrong with you people?" he shouted at the audience. His voice carried a satirical upward twist. "You act as if there was nothing new under the sun! Where are you from, Brooklyn?"

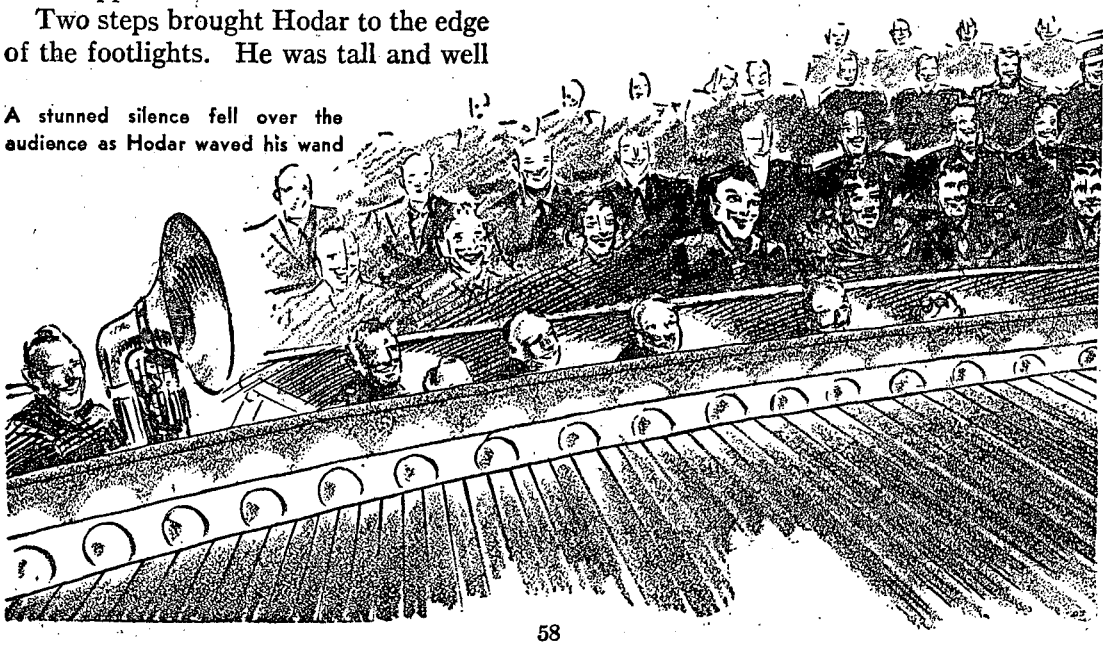
There was a sag of shocked silence in the theater. Then a voice from the gallery yelled,

"Why don'tcha get somethin' new?"

Hodar peered angrily at the sea of faces. Another voice took up the cry.

"Hey! Why not show us a guy from Mars!"

"Welles did it!" still another voice jeered.



A stunned silence fell over the audience as Hodar waved his wand

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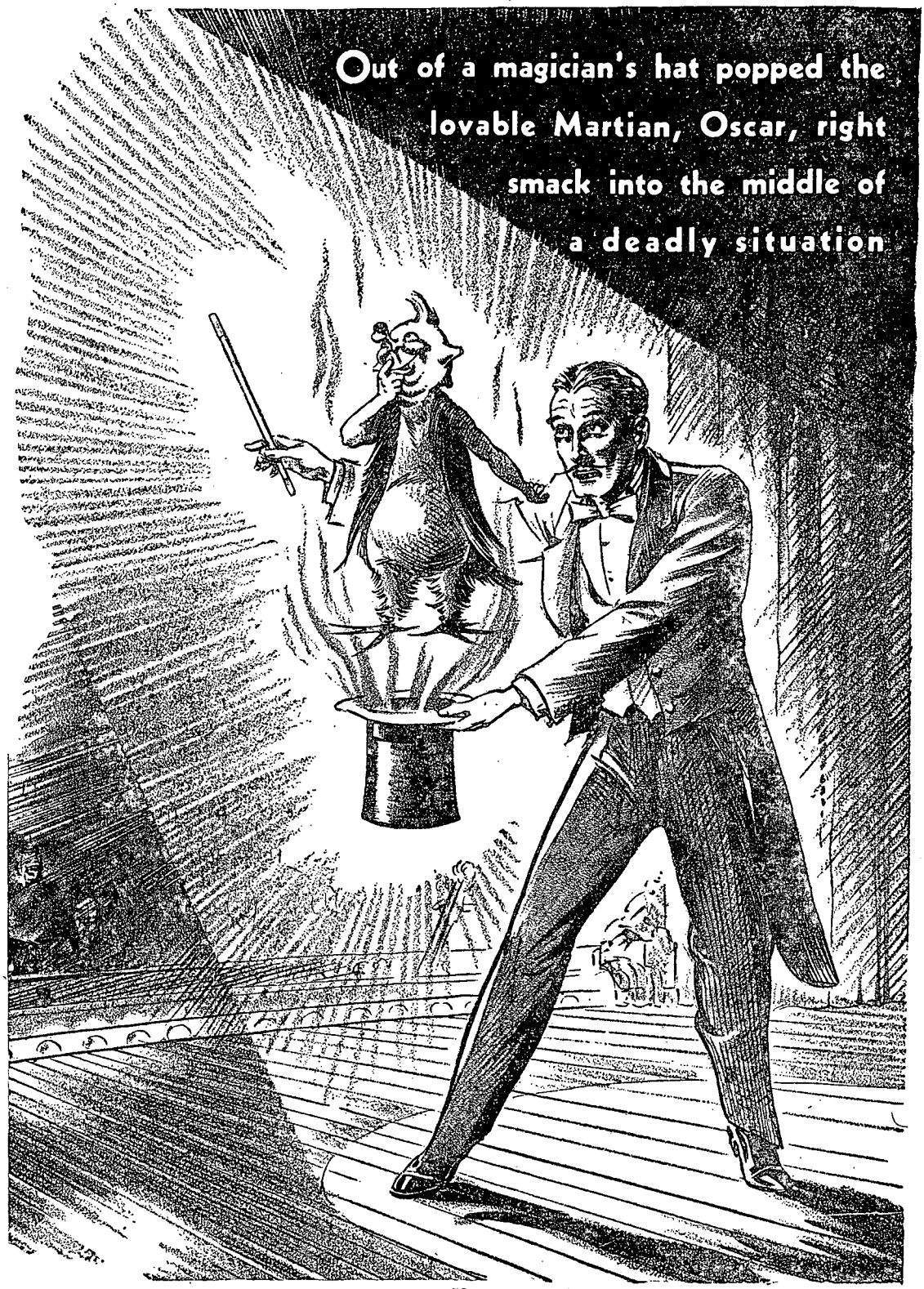

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Hodar controlled himself; grinned out across the hot glare of calcium stage lights.

"If someone went to Mars and brought back a native, I could," he answered with a shrug. "However, since I can't produce a Martian, I'll show you my latest—a Follies girl from a top hat."

The magician turned and flicked his fingers. A stage assistant twirled him a shiny silk top hat. Hodar caught it in midair. He rumpled his hand in its interior, showing the audience its emptiness.

"Empty as the cupboard of a relief client," he pattered. "Now I set it on the stage before your eyes. Watch closely. There's nothing in it. I reach in . . . and behold . . . a stunning girl. . . ."

Hodar's hand withdrew from the hat. Suddenly his muscles stiffened, the expression on his face froze.

A woman in the third row gasped. Someone screamed. Another woman fainted. Sections of the vast audience came to their feet, stunned by the incredible object the magician suddenly let drop on the stage. The confusion grew. Then came an instant of perfect stillness, as if thousands of people had all held their breath for one amazed moment. . . .

IT was me—Os-kar. I'm from Mars.

I came out of that top hat and knocked the crowd for a row of planetoids. I don't know how I got there, but it won't take me long to find out. Intelligence is one of my assets, as you will soon understand.

Hodar dropped me on the stage with a bang. His amazement was as great as that of the crowd. He limped back a couple of feet before he could recover. For a second, I thought he was going to dash out of the theater like the others, who were racing madly toward the exits yelling:

"They've come! The Martian Invasion! Orson Welles was right!"

Then I saw that Hodar the Magician had more guts than that. Here I was, —on Earth. Hodar seemed to realize it was his fault.

I guess I looked pretty surprising. When I pulled myself up proudly to my full height of four feet five inches, I looked like a pretty dapper little fellow. My legs are quite stubby. I resemble a penguin somewhat, being a bit wide at the bottom. I've ordinary hands though, and skin tougher and more porous than yours.

My clothes are made of feathers; black tails, white vest and front, like an evening suit. But I can take them off.

It was my nose that really upset the audience. It's tulip shaped. It has a pert sort of flare at the end, something like your old-fashioned gramaphone horns. The rest of my face is rather ordinary. My skin is slightly salmon color. My ears are conical, with the points out instead of in, like yours.

The theater was half empty before Hodar the Magician and the bewildered orchestra could establish order out of chaos. When the audience slowly realized there weren't any more like me, they settled down nervously.

I, of course, suffered no fear. I am a complete stranger to that emotion. But I was keenly insulted by the audience. I'll explain that later. It has to do with my tulip nose.

"Do you talk?" exclaimed Hodar. A showman to the core, he was immediately taking advantage of the situation, despite his own confusion. I liked the quizzical smile on his lips and the tone of his voice when he addressed me.

"I'm Os-kar," I answered. It was rather difficult making myself absolutely clear, for we Martians never use

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sounds as a means of communication.

"Oscar!" Hodar the Magician laughed politely. He turned toward the audience. "Ladies and gentlemen, I give you Oscar."

I took a bow.

"Whaa—what is it?" stuttered some brave soul from the balcony.

Hodar took my small hand, leading me to the edge of the stage. Again I was insulted—but I'll explain that later.

"Oscar," the magician addressed me in a clear voice so the audience could hear. "What are you? I hope you're what I think you are."

"I am," I answerered. "I'm from Os-kam. I believe you call it Mars."

I NOTICED a puzzled expression on Hodar's face. I could not get over the fact that though he was handsome, even by our standards, his nose was absolutely undeveloped. There was not the least flare at its end.

"You'd like to know how I, Os-kar, came here and how I speak your language of sounds?" I suggested.

Hodar nodded.

"To be brief," I began, dusting my feather sleeve, "we of Os-kam know a great deal about you Earthmen. Some moons ago, two of your creatures visited our planet with a curious rocket device. We also intercepted radio waves from this planet. At first we thought them mere sound impulses. Then we discovered they were means of communication. That was amazing—a race of people using sound for a language.

"I studied these sound waves. You see, on Mars we utilize sound mainly as a source of power. However, many of us learned your sound language and some of your history from the two rocketeers who claimed they came, not from Earth but Terr-i-hoot."

"Terr-i-hoot!" the magician chuckled. "You mean Terre Haute, Indiana. Well, well, it's a small solar system after all."

"Very small," I answered.

There was a ripple of applause from the audience. The people had lost their fears. And it so happened that my sensitive nose was less assailed by rank insults from the row upon row of seats beyond the footlights.

"Did you return here with the rocket?" someone shouted.

"No. The rocket was smashed. The two Earthmen are still living on Mars," I explained. "And only a moment ago I was complacently working on my experiments with sound in my laboratory on the edge of the dry Mare Cimerium. I don't understand the sudden blackness that overcame me. Nor the swirling funnel of gloom that seemed to transfer me to Earth. But here I am—Os-kar."

"Oscar! No accent," Hodar corrected me.

By this time the men and women in the audience were beginning to warm up to me. I suppose the name Os-kar had something to do with it. They cheered and flooded me with questions. They were taking me to their hearts.

Suddenly a new outbreak of shouting and confusion burst from the rear of the theater. A host of burly, blue-coated men charged down the aisles. They leaped upon the stage.

"The riot squad!" gasped Hodar. Sensing danger, he stepped beside me.

"You're under arrest for disturbing the peace! Where is it?" the leader of the riot squad barked at Hodar.

Then his eyes lit on me. He took one blinking look and stopped short. The others piled behind him, pushing him forward.

"That's the thing!" he yelled, pointing at me in amazement. "Shoot it, boys! Don't take no chances. It's dangerous!"

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From the direction of the audience there was an ominous rumble of dissatisfaction. It welled up, but not soon enough to turn the sub-machine guns leveled at my chest.

ABRUPTLY, the weapons unleashed bars of yellow flame. Hodar reeled back, grazed by a bullet.

The heaviest charge struck me. Bullet after bullet zipped at my sturdy little chest and ricochetted across the stage. Direct hits rocked me somewhat, though they flattened and fell at my feet. No one realized the density and compactness of my flesh deflected such deathly missiles.

The police fell back a step, dazed.

"It ain't human!" screamed their leader. "Quick—tear gas!"

On the instant, thousands in the audience cried out.

"Boo! Boo! Leave him alone! Oscar's all right!"

Then their sense of fair play spurred them into action. A hundred men rushed the stage, snatching the guns from the hands of the riot squad.

Fists flew and cries of anger raged through the theater. I could hear the cracking of fists all about me. Suddenly one blue-jacketed giant wrenched himself from the crowd and came at me. He whirled the butt of his gun in the air to brain me.

Hodar flashed by me. His fist cut a short arc, crashed thunderously into my aggressor. The man shuddered and dropped like a giant tree.

"Come on, Oscar!" Hodar grabbed me by the arm, propelling me toward one of the stage wings. "Looks like we'll be in the middle if this civil war lasts."

The riot squad raged and tried to break through, while a dozen men from the audience formed a semicircle, covering our retreat.

"This way!" Hodar shouted, helping me down an iron stairway to the stage door. "My car's the first one."

I hadn't yet accustomed myself to such activity on this strange planet. My body was quite heavy and awkward.* Hodar gave me a quick shove into an odd-looking vehicle standing at the curb.

CHAPTER II

Little Man—What Now?

EVENTS occurred so rapidly I had little time to make any detailed observations of the strange, towering American city looming around me as our car roared through the streets.

"Electrical illumination is rather crude and archaic, isn't it?" I observed to Hodar. "You people ought to be using radiated light. You've discovered the atom, haven't you?"

Hodar grinned and jerked the wheel of the car. We came to an abrupt stop. "My apartment," Hodar said. "Might as well put up here as anywhere until we get this straightened out. Mind?"

"No, not at all." I smiled the best way I could. My face isn't exactly made for polite smiles. The best it can usually get off is a wide grin.

We scooted through the entrance, leaving an amazed doorman in a faint on the sidewalk. A curious automatic elevator buzzed us upstairs. I suddenly sensed a new kind of crowd when Hodar opened the door.

"The Press!" Hodar snapped, trying to get me back into the elevator.

*On Earth, Oscar's normal Martian weight would increase about two-thirds. If he weighed 33 pounds on Mars, he would average around 99 pounds on Earth. To get around with any facility, he would necessarily have to be unusually strong, and still his movements would be awkward at first. The oxygen-burning capacity of his body might be greater due to atmospheric density on Earth, which might be a certain advantage.—Ed.

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It was too late.

They had us cornered in the hallway. Reporters, photographers, wire men and lady feature writers pounded down the hall, poking pencils and questions at us. I immediately liked them, despite their carefully staged bluster. They were an informal, friendly lot.

"How about it?" snapped a man from the *Evening Standard*. "Is Oscar bona fide?"

A photographer nudged his way through.

"Hey, Oscar," he yelled. "Will you cheese cake?" *

Hodar raised his hands for quiet.

"Okay, boys," he grinned. "Oscar will give out interviews in my apartment. But I warn you, be nice about it. He's a visitor from another world, you know."

The interviews and picture-taking went on until early morning. The reporters took turns plying me with questions and fighting for the single telephone to get their stories out.

They liked me. They marveled at my unusual intelligence. I knew more about the basic sciences than the smartest of them. Of course, biochemistry was my forte. They gasped and fell all over themselves getting at the phone when I outlined a working formula to cure cancer.

I tossed them some personal history too, explaining in simple terms that we Martians never use sound for speech. We use—odors. Having perfect control of every gland in our bodies, duct and ductless, it's simple to converse without making a sound.

"It's like an acrobat or swimmer with control over his muscles," I explained as best I could. "Or better, an Earthman singer with perfect control of pitch, volume and range.

"That's how we Martians convey thoughts—odor frequency from various internal glands. But you have to have a nose like mine."

This, naturally, was the reason why I had at first thought I was being insulted by Earth people. They control their sound vibrations but pay no attention to their glandular secretions, which are the equivalent of sound to me.

I DEMONSTRATED this faculty to the complete satisfaction of the reporters. I had them think of something without speaking a word. Then I told them what they had had in mind.

"Gee!" one of the boys gasped. "Mind-reading! I'm glad you ain't my wife."

"Not mind-reading," I grinned. "Thoughts cause the brain to send out minute electrical impulses that stimulate different glands. My tulip nose catches their sounds."

"What do you think about American women?" asked a tubby reporter from the *Bulletin*.

I grinned again. "I don't know," I countered. "What are those funny things they wear on their heads?"

"Hats!" all the reporters roared back as if it were an enormous joke.

Noticing that a couple of the men were chewing on some rubbery substance, I made inquiries.

"Chewing gum," I was told.

"What for—food?"

The reporter looked flustered. He jerked out his wad of gum, examined it for a moment. Then he grinned.

"It's a great American custom," he said. "Try it sometime."

"Has a nice smell," I commented. "Probably good for your teeth, too."

This made the reporters like me all the more. Being good fellows them-

* "Cheese cake," a term generally used by reporters meeting ships with celebrities on board. To have a movie actress sit on a ship's rail, cross her legs while being photographed, is called "cheese caking."—Ed.

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selves, they liked my candid ways. They sent their papers glowing reports about me.

In a short while we could hear newsboys rushing through the streets, shouting,

"Huxtra! Yuxtra! Man from Mars arrives. . . . Is he real or fake? . . . Mars . . . Gland Expert . . . Readdallabodid!" (This I took to be a kind of code.)

At daybreak an enormous crowd gathered in the street beneath the apartment window. I made personal appearances on the balcony every half hour while the crowd cheered madly. The good people of New York had taken me to their hearts.

Shortly after that the mayor came with the police commissioner. The latter apologized for the mistake his riot squad had made in the theater the previous evening. The audience had almost annihilated them.

"I am proud you chose New York in which to appear," said the mayor graciously. "I have been informed that I might induce you to sponsor our anti-noise campaign, which is now in full swing."

I nodded happily, agreeing to lend my name.

"But," I politely suggested, "New York could use an anti-smell campaign too."

"You may have something there," smiled the portly little official. "But Chicago is really the place for that."

AFTER the mayor had departed, Hodar drove the reporters and other civic delegations from the apartment so that we could get a much-needed rest.

"Oscar," sighed my friend, when we were finally alone, "you'll be a busy man this week. Twelve scientific organizations have already phoned. You're already an international figure."

I grinned my usual grin and began pulling off my stiff feather shirt.

"That depends on how long I stay on Earth," I said. "You're the one who ought to know that."

Hodar flashed me an embarrassed look.

"I could try the hat trick again," he said slowly. "But I don't know what would happen."

My tulip nose flexed slightly as I shook my head. I had visions of New York filling up with Martians like myself every time Hodar stuck his hand in his trick topper. No. That would never do.

The phone jingled. Hodar answered tiredly and then turned the receiver over to me.

"Hello, this is Oscar," I rattled off. I was already using the American pronunciation of my name to avoid difficulties.

"Oscar," repeated the voice over the wire. "Doctor Everett, Cancer Institute, speaking . . . our laboratories checked on the formula you issued a few hours ago . . ." The scientist's voice grew excited. "My God, man! It will work! It's twice as effective as radium against cancer. How did you do it?"

"Glands," I answered simply. "A matter of glandular control to check the rampant growth of tissues. My knowledge of glands and chemistry informed me how to get at the basic source of the disease."

"Humanity will repay . . ."

I had barely put down the phone when it rang again. Hodar talked this time. I saw his face turn ashen.

"They think he's dangerous," I heard him repeat. "Otto Stuermer . . ." My nose twitched, telling me Hodar was both angry and worried.

"What is it? Another one?" I asked

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when he hung up with a grimace.

Hodar's broad brow was furled with a series of sharp little V's.

"That was one of the reporters who was here," he explained slowly. "Says the people of New York are all for you, Oscar, but there's dirty work afoot. A crackpot named Stuermer, a powerful fellow in industry, wants you exposed. He's trying to whip up public sentiment against you. Claim's the whole Mars story is a fake and you should be destroyed or put behind bars . . . And he's powerful enough to do it!"

"A fake, huh!" I snapped. I knew damn well I was no fake.

"The lad from the *Standard* thinks it might be dangerous. Stuermer has plenty of money. He's kind of an unpopular business dictator around here."

"I wonder why," I mused slowly.

Strangely enough, this last thought and the startling events it led to, brought me to the doorway of my future profession—a detective. Yes, a biochemic detective. I did not know it then, but events of the most amazing character were in store.

CHAPTER III

The Fear Factory

HODAR and I were having breakfast in the apartment. I had not dressed yet. In fact, I was wearing one of Hodar's satin dressing gowns which almost matched my salmon-pink skin. I remember clearly what difficulties I had with the gown, the sleeves were so long. My hands were always getting lost around the elbows.

I was just about to recount my experiences of the previous day. I had visited a committee of physicists. Suddenly the doorbell buzzed most insistently.

Then the door smacked open on the instant and a bulky, domineering man rushed through the apartment to where we were seated. The man immediately reminded me of some sub-human creature with overhanging black brows and protruding jaws.

"Sit down!" the man exclaimed with a great deal of bluster. "Here's my card: Otto Stuermer, manufacturer of Stuermer Products; biggest in the country." Then he took a look at me and stopped abruptly. "Humph! The Mars fake—don't look human!"

Flushed with anger, I snapped back, "Your nose isn't so hot either!"

If my hands hadn't been mixed up in the sleeves of the dressing gown, I'd have slapped Stuermer's fleshy face, despite the contrasting differences in our sizes.

"Well—what is it?" Hodar questioned, glancing from the calling card to the big man.

"I heard about your show—and this—this thing," growled Stuermer, glancing at me. "I want to buy this Oscar thing—how much?"

Well, that just about knocked me apart. You could have strained me through a colander, the way I felt. I was too burned up to say a word.

"Sorry!" Hodar answered icily. "Oscar is my pal. What's more, Oscar isn't part of my show. He's an interplanetary citizen."

Otto Stuermer's face blazed angrily.

"You gotta sell him! I'll make you!"

The big man stormed about the room. The table lamps, the tables and ashtrays trembled beneath his heavy tread.

"Say, what are you so interested in me for?" I suddenly demanded. "You're the chap that's plugging this idea that I'm a fake!"

Stuermer shot me a malevolent glance and turned to Hodar.

"Gonna sell him?" he spat. "I gotta have him . . . I'll pay five thousand dollars!"

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At the same instant Stuermer scrawled out a check for the full amount. He tossed it at Hodar.

"Call my bank. Verify it," he rumbled. "Deliver him to my plant in an hour."

"Wait a minute!" roared Hodar. "You can't just—"

Otto Stuermer blew out of the apartment as he had entered—pompously.

"I don't like the smell of him," I told Hodar when we were alone. "Rankly insulting . . . super-pituitary activity. Dictator type." *

"He's got a lot of nerve busting in here," snapped Hodar.

"Something to that," I grinned thoughtfully. "I'd like to know just why."

Hodar suddenly grabbed me by the collar, shaking me excitedly.

"Say, Oscar!" he cried. "What do you say if we drop over to his Jersey City factory in an hour and look around. Come on. Get your feather duds on."

THE look on Hodar's face surprised me. It was filled with boyish excitement. As much as I disliked dressing so early in the morning, I did. You see, after a few days in Manhattan I had already acquired that cosmopolitan habit of feeling that the A.M. hours were still the middle of the night.

A short while later I had donned my silk topper, which Hodar had bought to match my clothing, and was ready to go. My get-up always caused a sensation in the downstairs lobby when we passed through. On one occasion the newspaper society columns featured my photo as the best-dressed bachelor Martian in town.

Even the cops directing traffic as we drove toward the Holland Tunnel tossed me cheery greetings.

Finally we pulled up near the Otto Stuermer factory. It was quite a distance out. It looked like one of those giant model industrial cities which I, as a Martian, find so amazing. Stuermer's plant was surrounded by hundreds of cottages, no doubt owned by the Stuermer Corporation.

"Looks like they do their complete living here too," Hodar observed, crawling out of the car. "Company stores, assembly hall, movie theater—and all right on the grounds."

We went to the main gate. A guard stopped us.

"Salesmen — Allied Steel," Hodar tossed off.

The guard stared at me in bewilderment.

"Fiirr—first building," he pointed, stuttering with fright. "Bu—bu—but don't go anywhere else. Against the rules."

There was a big sign, Purchasing Department, over the door of the first building. Hodar marched right past it toward another group of buildings.

"Scout around first!" he grinned.

It was then my nose reacted strangely to the air. The tulip flare twitched

* The pituitary gland, hidden away in a little bony receptacle in the base of the skull, is responsible for abnormalities in physical growth such as ordinary human beings who are so tall we call them "giants." Abnormal development of the pituitary impairs the action of vital growth processes within the body, causing accentuated growth, which may not be entirely in height, as other parts of the body may grow out of proportion to normal size. An overactive pituitary also affects character traits, often making an individual dominating, if not domineering, beyond the average.

The "dictator type" of personality may reflect itself in many types of aggressive individuals who, without having necessarily more brain power than ordinarily intelligent people, are nevertheless endowed with a sometimes terrifying mental vigor and physical drive.

Gland functions as they make for aggressiveness and leadership in individuals are becoming more and more the object of intensive scientific research. It is expected that within a relatively short time, scientists will be able to understand what makes for genius and unusual intellectual ability.—Ed.

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violently before I could control it.

"You look like a rabbit," grinned Hodar.

But I was in no mood for jokes.

"Adrenalin!" I gasped. "This place is permeated with the odor of fear. It's coming from that shop over there."

"Come on!" yelled Hodar, dragging me toward the building at double time.

In a moment we were gaping through a low window. Beyond it, hundreds of men were slaving along a conveyor belt. I became doubly aware that these silent men seemed to respond to terrific mass sense of fear. It surrounded their bodies like a heavy opiate.

"Fear!" I hissed at Hodar. "They're suffering from a fear stimulus. Every one of them! But why?"

"I don't *see* any fear," Hodar declared.

"But I smell it!" I cut in. "Glands! The men react as if they were under the whip of a slave master. Is this common in America?"

Hodar shook his head slowly. He was patently torn between the dilemma that he trusted my findings, yet he couldn't visualize them himself.

"Slavery—fear slavery," he muttered, pulling back from the window. "No! You must be wrong, Oscar. We did have slavery until the Civil War, but that's been over with for almost eighty years, thank God."

I snapped my fingers. "I'll tell you what! Let's go to the main office. Let's see what this Stuermer has to say."

STUERMER'S mahogany - paneled office, in the purchasing building the guard had pointed out to us, was almost empty. Silently, we passed through two waiting rooms before someone challenged us.

It was a girl; his private secretary.

I used to think there was no sight prettier than the dazzling show of clustered Pleiades visible on our Martian horizon. But Stuermer's secretary outshone them. Her slim poised body and pale chiseled face were enough to cast a spell on any man.

"Mr. Stuermer isn't here!" she exclaimed in a very startled tone. "Did the guard let you in?" She stared at me, not sure if I was real or a toy.

Then I sensed that she suffered from the same emotion of fear I had detected so strongly in the conveyor shop. She fidgeted nervously with her handkerchief.

"Hola!" I heard Hodar suddenly exclaim. "Pardon me, but you're just too pretty to be real. Where've you been all my life? Worked here long?"

The girl flashed Hodar a troubled smile.

"I've been here two weeks."

She pointed hastily at a desk on which a small bronze block read, *Dedrie Kane.*

The way Hodar looked at her, I knew it was love at first sight. However, I never draw conclusions from facial expressions. I use my nose. It told me that the girl felt the same way about Hodar.

"You're a natural for the stage," grinned Hodar. "This is no place to be wasting yourself. How about coming to work for me?"

Then a very strange thing happened. My nose told me the girl was ready to accept. Suddenly she stared at us in fright and began weeping.

"I would — oh, I would!" she sobbed. "But I can't. I just can't—Father has been killed—no! I mustn't tell you because no one knows . . . But I can't leave . . ."

Hodar put his arm around the girl, tenderly. She seemed even prettier next to him, and he acted sort of helpless, as most Earthmen are when women cry.

It remained for me to balance things.

"What do you mean, no one knows?"

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I asked abruptly. "How'd your father die?"

The girl bit her full lips and trembled.

"I don't know. He disappeared a week after he began working for Mr. Stuermer. He was a chemist . . ."

"Leave her alone, Oscar," Hodar snapped.

"When was that?" I asked ruthlessly, feeling that this once I must ignore him.

"Last week—Monday."

"Police know?"

Like fever, a spasm of shuddering fear swept through the girl's frail body. Her shoulders trembled convulsively. Her body suddenly stiffened, she tore away from Hodar, staring toward the doorway.

"Dedrie!"

I whirled around and came face to face with Otto Stuermer. Beside him stood a pallid, dead-faced wisp of a man. It was Mat Dakin, one of Stuermer's office "yes-men," I learned afterward.

STUERMER glared at the three of us imperiously. Then his thick lips curled in a faint sneering smile. He finally addressed Hodar.

"So you finally brought the Oscar thing! Good! Leave it here and get out! You've got your money."

Hodar abruptly snatched the big man's five thousand dollar check from his pocket and twirled it at him.

"There's your cash," he rasped. "Ask Oscar if he's for sale."

A glint of suspicion shot into Stuermer's feral eyes. He grabbed the girl's arm violently.

"What have you been telling them?" he barked angrily.

"This!" Hodar suddenly blasted.

The blurred image of the magician's fist cut past my ear. There was a single pistonlike *crack!* Stuermer roared. His body shook like jelly. He reeled backward, crashed into a filing cabinet.

The girl suddenly intervened.

"Stop, please!" she cried, clutching Hodar's arm when he closed in on Stuermer. Her dark eyes were filled with terrified appeal.

"That's better," grunted Stuermer, shaking himself like a gigantic beast and lifting himself to his feet. "Now get out! Dakin, see that they get out."

"Just what are you trying to hide—murder?" I interrupted.

"Dakin!" thundered the big man.

Suddenly we found ourselves staring into the cold muzzle of a revolver. Dakin waved it wearily, indicating the door.

"Get along, there."

I NOTICED that the pale little man urging us across the factory yard to the gate with a pistol was far more frightened than a man should be with a pistol. He was in fact obsessed by fear, like all the others.

Twitching my nose cautiously, I began experimenting.

"Dakin," I said. "What are you afraid of?"

The little man became white as a sheet. His gun hand trembled until I was sure he'd slip on the trigger. My nose had never recorded such a rampant flow of stark fear in one man. His limbs shook like an aspen leaf.

Then I poked my salmon-pink face under his jaw.

"What's Stuermer's s e c r e t?" I snapped.

Dakin let out one terrified scream, dropped the pistol and high-tailed across the yard, leaving us high and dry.

"My God!" Hodar gasped. "His hair was actually standing on end!"

"That's what I figured," I tossed. "I'm beginning to see the light now. Take me to Otto Stuermer's home."

As you see, I had already jumped at

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certain conclusions. I explained them bit by bit to Hodar while we drove from the fenced-off factory to Stuermer's palatial lodge a few miles south of the factory.

"The girl is frightened, uncontrollably frightened," I explained. "Dakin is obsessed by fear. Everyone in that factory is gripped by an uncontrollable fear—everyone but Otto Stuermer.

"If it can happen in one factory, it can happen everywhere in America. We've got to find out what's wrong before it spreads. Imagine—the entire United States dominated by fear!"

HODAR smiled grimly, jamming his foot on the accelerator.

"You're getting like a detective, Oscar."

"What's that?"

"They're people who go around finding people who would have been found anyway," said Hodar.

"Yeah, we're going to find Dedrie Kane's father," I said. "He discovered Stuermer's secret—so he disappeared."

Hodar snaked the car off the main highway and down a winding side road. After a few bends a big house came into view. It was built solidly, a mixture of Hanoverian and Gothic styles. It was like an impregnable fortress.

"If Stuermer is keeping old man Kane there, we'll have a fat chance of busting in," said Hodar.

"We'll find him," I replied confidently.

I worked my way out of the car and went past the main entrance of the estate to a small servant's gate some hundred yards beyond. We were pretty well covered by trees once we got inside the fence.

Instead of working up toward the house, I cut across the expansive lawn toward the garage. Hodar followed silently. I didn't pay much attention to him now. My nose twitched like a tulip in undecided weather. *There was death in the air!*

Then, for an instant I got sidetracked. My temples drummed with the rush of blood. A heavy unbearable odor roared in my head. I keeled right over on my back, as if someone had hit me an awful crack, and I was sickeningly dizzy until Hodar lugged me out in the open.

I had tangled with a bunch of rose bushes.

"If you ever want to get rid of me," I gagged after coming to, "give me roses. That's the one smell in the world I'm allergic to."

Then I started off again, snooping around like a half-baked bloodhound. I was back on the original spoor which led around to the rear of the garage, just out of sight of the house.

This time it wasn't roses.

"Get a shovel," I ordered Hodar. "Dig here, quick!"

Hodar acted a bit leery.

"Now, Oscar," he countered. "Cut the treasure hunt. We're searching for Kane. We don't want the cops here because we're messing up somebody's back yard."

"You'll have the cops here for a corpse—dig!" I snapped exasperatedly.

Hodar began digging. The first few spades of brown dirt turned up nothing. Suddenly Hodar dropped the shovel, fell to his knees and began scratching away madly with his hands. The dirt fell away from an oddly twisted leg.

The magician dragged the corpse into the daylight. It couldn't be identified. Not in the condition it was in. But there was a garotte, a crude wire one, embedded in the man's throat. A purple, discolored, swollen tongue had forced its way between tight lips.

Hodar's jaw dropped like a toboggan.

"Is this . . . Kane?" he said slowly.

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"Why, that poor girl. She mustn't know it happened like this."

I grabbed him by the arm, starting across the lawn to the car, leaving the body.

"It's Kane," I said. "The hereditary odor of father and daughter is similar, despite the putrefaction that has set in. But you can't prove it. The flesh, in addition to decay, has been too mutilated by acids. Never identify it—

"We've got some work to do now. Fast work. Listen, Hodar! I want a sample of every chemical and drug used in the laboratory at Stuermer's plant to be delivered at the apartment right away. Call the supply houses. Find what he uses.

"And here's another job for you. Get that man Dakin to the apartment—even if you have to kidnap him."

Hodar made a mental note of my instructions. Suddenly he looked at me inquisitively.

"How did you know the body was here?" he asked.

"Glands, Hodar, glands!" I grimaced. "I know a lot of things. Now do your part. Get the chemicals and bring Dakin around. Then call the police. Tell them where— No! Tell them to come to the apartment at seven o'clock. The murderer will be there!"

CHAPTER IV

The Fear Conspiracy

HODAR was not only a magician, but a good organizer. Rush delivery after rush delivery streamed into the apartment. By late afternoon I was practically waddling among jars of every conceivable chemical, all specifically used in the Otto Stuermer plant laboratory.

I had already identified most of them by name, content and odor. They were laid out on card tables all over the apartment. I carefully nosed from one container to another, occasionally breaking ampole ends, and playing off certain formulas.

As you know, odors are like sounds to me. Once or twice I struck particularly pleasant combinations of chemicals. For example, beta-napthol, iodoform and guaiacol really thrilled me. It was like a symphony.

"That's the second movement, Opus Twelve," I decided.

I had just come to certain conclusions after my investigation of the chemicals when Hodar rushed in with, not one, but two fear-drugged prisoners. It was as I had expected—Dakin and Dedrie Kane.

"I took her too," Hodar explained. "She didn't want to come, but I took her. Tough, too. I had to brain the plant watchman."

I smiled unconcernedly. "That's right," I grinned. "I didn't mention her because I knew you'd bring her."

The girl dropped onto a settee, flashing a fearful glance at the mass of chemicals in the room. She was about to speak but suddenly she quieted, throwing Hodar a troubled look.

"I had a pretty long talk with the chemicals," I began explaining. "I know why your father was—"

I saw Hodar come up behind the girl's chair and rest a reassuring hand on her shoulder.

"He discovered Stuermer's secret, or part of it," I ran on. "So have I. That's why he wants to get rid of me. He knew I'd uncover it sooner or later, perhaps by accident. He wasn't taking any chances . . ."

I grabbed a hypo needle from one of the tables and grabbed Dakin's arm. The man was so frightened he couldn't budge.

"Harmless," I snapped. "A sedative."

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The man's flesh was covered with goose pimples when I injected the serum intravenously. Then a remarkable change occurred, exactly as I had expected.

Color returned to his pallid cheeks. He seemed to take hold of himself. He was now acting like a man instead of the fear-ridden individual he had been. He suddenly sighed, smiling at me weakly.

"I haven't felt like this for two years," he mumbled.

"You're okay now," I snapped. "It's exactly as I doped out. Every man in the Stuermer plant was drugged—fear drugged. The adrenal glands were overactivated. That had me guessing a while. Generally a dose of epinephrine extract stimulates the nervous system via adrenalin secretions, just enough to warn a person of danger. But Stuermer's people were overdosed into a state of fear demoralization.

"I've discovered that he's developed a new acid derivative. It maintains the super-stimulus over long periods of time. That was half of what Dedrie's father discovered."

"But that's impossible! Why?" cut in Hodar.

"Oh, no it's not!" cried Dakin.

I PUSHED Hodar aside calmly. Then I almost poked my nose into Dakin's thin face.

"Dakin can tell us the other half of the secret that Dedrie's father discovered . . . can't you, Dakin?"

Through force of habit Dakin trembled, then steadied himself.

"I'll tell you," he mumbled. "But I want protection."

"Out with it!" I snapped. "I know it anyway, but I want Hodar to hear it."

Dakin began talking in a monotonously low voice.

"Two years ago Otto Stuermer began to have political ambitions. He figured that he would set out by gaining control of the state, then branching out nationally. His workers, already living in the company town which he owns, and being constantly under his thumb at every turn, revolted at this new grab for power.

"They held a meeting and decided to resist his new ambitions with their full voting strength. Since that day, no one has ever talked about such things again. Everybody suddenly became afraid of Stuermer . . ."

This didn't make sense. "But why, man?" I demanded.

"*They* didn't know why," he said. "But they were afraid, all right. They were too frightened to protest, too scared to quit their jobs . . . Now no one's been able to call his soul his own for two years. You can't imagine the fear—it never ended. We were held down by the same horrible fear that keeps nations under the heel of dictators . . ."

Dakin shuddered, wrung his hands painfully. He took a deep breath and continued.

"But it's bigger than simply one factory. It's a conspiracy of fear. Stuermer wants fear slavery throughout the country. He already undersells legitimate markets. Now, with his new political strength, he can pull strings, use his vast wealth as a club. With these two weapons he can forge the greatest industrial combine ever known."

"That," Hodar muttered, "is a happy thought."

"In the end," Dakin went on dully, "they'll all use his epinephrine formula. The stuff is colorless, soluble in water. He mixes it in a great water tank, pipes it through the plant. There's a drinking fountain almost everywhere you turn. The workers never had a chance . . ."

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The man clenched his fists bitterly. "Don't you see? Stuermer will have more than half the people in this country held in fear of slavery when he gets control of all the industries. One after the other, they'll be drugged!"

As Dakin finished there was a hollow gap of silence in the apartment. Hodar was looking kind of shaky and pale. You'd think he had pulled another Martian out of his topper.

"So that's why old Mr. Kane disappeared!" he gasped. "Well, what now? Let's go to the factory."

I grinned and shook my head.

"No," I said nonchalantly. "Just about now most detectives have a Martini. I would like to try one—"

I heard the door click. At the same instant, as if superimposed on the first sound, came a blinding jet of flame and a roar of thunder. Dakin collapsed.

I rushed toward the door and right into the long business-like muzzle of a Mauser, Otto Stuermer's automatic. The big man shoved me back. His eyes were glazed with rage.

"Should have locked you two up this morning," he rasped harshly.

"Well, if it isn't Otto!" I yelled breezily. "I was expecting you—but not this early."

Stuermer ignored me. His feral gaze clamped on the girl and Hodar.

"Thought you'd run out on me, eh?" he snapped at Dedrie. "Get over in the corner. I'll take care of these two."

WHILE Stuermer waited for the girl to move aside I edged toward one of the tables. There was an anesthetic hypo all prepared for this occasion.

"Wait a second," Hodar snapped out. "You're through, Stuermer! You killed one man. You're not going to murder more!"

"Shut up! I'm running this!" the big man roared in a furious voice.

"Gonna bury the bodies in your yard this time for the cops to find?" spat Hodar.

For a tenuous moment Stuermer remained silent; then he bared his teeth, leering and cunning.

"Who's going to kill who?" he laughed venomously. "You're coming to the factory. You'll be one of the idiots . . . A fear slave . . . One of my millions . . . No one will know where you went."

Hodar grinned coolly. He watched until Dedrie got beyond the line of fire.

"Okay, rave—but drop that gun!" he suddenly rasped. "I'll wring you limp!"

It was like lashing the man across the mouth with an open hand. He boiled with insensate fury.

I lunged across the table, snatching the hypo. Stuermer roared angrily and turned the gun on me. He fired once, twice. The slugs sang off my chest. I reeled back a step each time from the impact.

"Damn you!" I heard him scream as he unloaded the chamber at me.

His jowls sagged, seeing me still alive. Then he turned tail and dashed toward the door screaming bloody murder.

He rushed blindly into Hodar's solid fist, stumbled backward, crashing into my tables, upsetting jars of chemicals. He turned like a cornered rat and lunged at Hodar, swinging the butt end of his Mauser.

The weapon swung down. I closed my eyes and opened them again. Hodar danced around, grinning.

"What are you trying to do? Kill me?"

Stuermer grunted and doubled up. His face was puffed and purplish. He grunted and gasped for wind. Hodar's fists jabbed in and out with the light-

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ning accuracy of a cobra's stroke.

Then, just as Stuermer's head began rolling back and forth like an old potato, the apartment filled up with people. I took one look at them and realized I had made a mistake. It was the press boys and the justice of the peace!

CHAPTER V

The Reward

THE newspaper boys were skeptical about turning Stuermer over to the police when the bluecoats finally came. A half-hour argument ensued before they gave up the prisoner.

"It ain't justice," one of the boys crabbed. "Oscar is a pal of mine. This hypertrophiated dictator was trying to do him in. He should have been run through the rotary press with the final edition like we wanted."

The other boys felt about the same. They splashed the story all over the front pages: pictures of Hodar, Dedrie and me; a signed confession by Otto Stuermer.

They clustered around the apartment most of the evening and kept coming in and going out. They had me rehash the story half a dozen times.

"What gets me," grinned the lad from the *Standard*, "is—how did you know that gorilla was coming up here? You called the cops around noon."

I glanced at Hodar and Dedrie. The two of them were naturals together. They billed and cooed as if they were alone on a desert island.

"Don't you boys see it?" I grinned. "Why, it was simply a matter of logic. You know the basic formulas and after that—effect follows cause."

"Come on, bring it down to our level," laughed the reporter.

"Well, I just asked Hodar to kidnap Dakin and bring him here. When we saw Dakin earlier in the day, he ran from us out of stark fear. I figured he was suffering from something more than fear stimulus such as epinephrine. He knew why old man Kane was killed.

"So, I had Hodar bring Dakin. It was logical that if he went to the plant, he'd also bring back Dedrie Kane. Then, when Stuermer discovered the two were missing, he wouldn't waste much time looking for them or his secret would fall into the wrong hands. Simple, eh?"

The reporters scratched their heads, one after another.

Just then, the tall narrow man who had been waiting in a rather quiet, puzzled way throughout all the excitement pushed his way among us.

"I'm Magistrate Sherman," he said diffidently. "I believe you called me at noon and told me to be here. . . ."

I glanced up, startled, then suddenly remembered.

"Oh, gosh! The justice of the peace!" I stammered. "Gee, I forgot all about you. I've had so much on my mind since I got here from Mars. . . ."

Hodar and Dedrie were in each other's arms now. Their lips were fastened, one pair over the other. Kissing, I believe it is called.

I came between them and pushed them apart, much to their combined annoyance and embarrassment.

"Hodar," I said—and I spoke from experience, "don't let it throw you." I am afraid your American slang is becoming almost second nature.

Hodar blushed. Dedrie's cheeks got rosy. The justice of the peace coughed and cleared his throat.

"Magistrate," I ordered, lapsing back into the vernacular, "do your stuff."

Ten minutes later they were settled for life. As for me, I think I like it here on Earth. Wouldn't be surprised if I stayed on for quite a spell.

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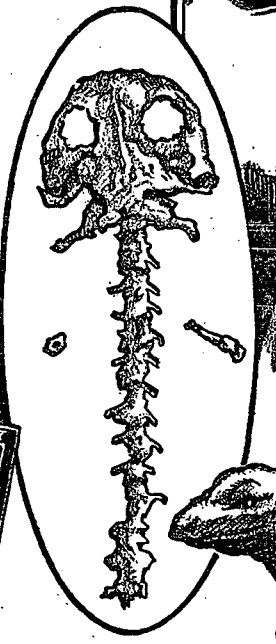
fantastic

In 1810, GEORGE CUVIER, PALEONTOLOGIST, MADE A REMARKABLE DISCOVERY. WHILE CHECKING A STONE SLAB CONTAINING BONES WHICH JOHN J. SCHEUCHZER HAD PREVIOUSLY PRONOUNCED THOSE OF A MAN LOST IN THE GREAT FLOOD, HE EXPOSED OTHER HIDDEN BONES AND PROVED THEM TO BE THE SKELETON OF A GIANT LIZARD.

Joe Sewell

The Swiss scientist, JOHN JACOB SCHEUCHZER, WHO IN 1726 PUBLISHED A BOOK DESCRIBING A FOSSIL HE DISCOVERED NEAR LAKE CONSTANCE, AND WHICH HE BELIEVED TO BE THE REMAINS OF A HUMAN WHO DIED IN THE FLOODS OF GENESIS.



SCHEUCHZER NAMED THESE BONES "HOMO DILUVII TESTIS" OR "SKELETON OF A MAN WHO PERISHED IN THE GREAT FLOOD."

GEORGE CUVIER, WHO EXPOSED SCIENTIST SCHEUCHZER'S UNINTENTIONAL HOAX.

A GIANT JAPANESE SALAMANDER BROUGHT BACK TO EUROPE BY EXPLORER VON SIEBOLD ABOUT 20 YEARS AFTER CUVIER'S DISCOVERY, WAS FOUND TO BE A VERY CLOSE RELATIVE OF SCHEUCHZER'S FOSSIL..

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hoaxes

BY WILLY LEY

John Jacob Scheuchzer did not intend to perpetrate a hoax on the public when he published his book, but his mistake grew to become a matter of serious debate

THE term "unintentional hoax" might have been difficult to explain a number of years ago, but since Orson Welles spread panic over a whole nation without knowing or even guessing what he was doing, everybody knows from experience what unintentional hoaxing is.

Welles presented fiction as fiction; it was not his fault that his listeners took it seriously. But the reverse thing may also happen. Somebody may present something which he believes is the genuine article. Yet later generations may point to it as a most amusing hoax.

The history of paleontology presents a beautiful example of that second variety of unintentional hoaxes.

In 1726 the Swiss scientist Johann Jacob Scheuchzer published his book "Physicia Sacra," a title the meaning of which (*not* its translation) may be rendered into English as "Natural History of the Bible."

One of the high points of the work was a woodcut which presented, to use Scheuchzer's own words: "the sorry skeleton of an old sinner who perished in the Flood."

This picture was the woodcut of a fossil, the original fossil being partly visible on a slab of stone about six feet long and two feet wide. The visible parts consisted of a skull, pressed flat, with two large eyeholes, a considerable length of spine and a few bones that protruded here and there.

Hardly anyone today would guess very wrongly when confronted with Scheuchzer's "find." Scheuchzer himself, however, firm fundamentalist by inheritance and upbringing, mistook the fossil fundamentally.

He claimed in all seriousness that this slab of stone, found at Oeningen near Lake Constance, showed the remains of a man, a human being who had drowned in the waters of the Great Flood. Consequently he named his discovery *Homo diluvii testis,* (freely, "man who witnessed the Flood") wrote a rhymed epitaph as funny as it is untranslatable, and really went to town with his complete description.

It was written in the Swiss German of his time but carefully and cumbersomely followed Latin syntax, employing all the (somewhat limited) rhetorical means at his disposal to make impressive sounds.

Translated the description read about like this:

* * *

Homo diluvii testis

Skeleton of a Man Who Perished in the Great Flood. We possess countless proofs of the terrible Flood, the universal Deluge, such as numberless plants and fishes, four-footed beasts and insects and

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vermin, clams and snails.

Of men, however, that perished in the Deluge very few remains have been found so far. They probably drifted at the surface of the waters and decayed, and of the few bones infrequently found, one could not tell whether they were of men or not. This picture, however, presented as an accurate woodcut to the curious and learned public, is a certain and unfailing example of remains from the Great Flood.

It does not show only a few traces that with the aid of a fertile imagination might resemble a human shape, but a most complete identity with all parts of the human skeleton. This man, whose memorial stone surpasses all Roman, Greek, Egyptian and Oriental relics both in age and in certainty, is shown in a front view.

* * *

THE whole thing was dated as "In the Year After the Deluge."

The "curious and learned publick" of that time did not say a word. The people looked at the picture of the "sorry sinner", wondered that there were not more of his breed and were satisfied. In other words, they agreed, it was authentic. And a rich Hollander who felt the urge of possessing the original slab of stone fossil as an awful example—we dare not even guess for what reason—paid quite a number of heavy Dutch guilders and had the stone shipped to his native country.

It was not until the year 1810, almost a full century later, that anyone dared to question Scheuchzer's judgment. This man was the great French "father of paleontology", George Cuvier. Cuvier had his own ideas about the whole matter.

The Deluge or Great Flood was to him what it is to most modern scientists and theologians — a fairly localized catastrophe, possibly in the Gulf of Persia, possibly in the Mediterranean. There exists the geological possibility that only about 25,000 years ago, the Mediterranean Sea did not exist in its present form, but was a vast and probably fertile valley.

One day the barrier that is now marked as the Strait of Gibraltar may have opened and the waters of the Atlantic Ocean rushed in, destroying and drowning whatever came into their path. There exists no proof yet that things actually did happen that way; but if they did, they would certainly give to the inhabitants—or rather to the survivors—the impression of a world-wide flood.

George Cuvier did not know about this. And as far as he was concerned, the Deluge was only a minor disaster. He believed in much greater disasters, which separated the geological periods of history and destroyed absolutely everything.

Scheuchzer had claimed that he had found a fossil man. He had to be wrong. And Cuvier got hold of the original slab of stone, then resting peacefully in Tyler's Museum in Haarlem, in The Netherlands, and began to expose the original bones, hidden in the stone.

He succeeded brilliantly; and when every bone that was preserved was open to view, nobody could doubt that the skeleton was not that of a man but of a fossilized salamander of large size!

In memory of Scheuchzer who, after all, had been the discoverer, Cuvier named it *Andrias Scheuchzeri,* a classification still to be found in the catalogues of science.

But the story of Scheuchzer's unintentional hoax had an aftermath only two decades later. An explorer by the

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name of F. von Siebold, who had traveled extensively in Japan, returned to Europe bringing with him a living specimen of what is now called the Japanese Giant Salamander, known in zoölogical circles as *Megalobatrachus maximus*.

That giant salamander reaches a length of five feet, when full grown, hardly less than Scheuchzer's fossil *Andrias*. And since the two animals were so much alike in size, they were soon compared more closely and it was discovered that the Japanese Giant Salamander is a very close relative of the fossil that created such a stir.

The Editor's Notebook

A CONFIDENTIAL CHAT WITH THE EDITOR

(Concluded from page 7)

YOUR editor has always been fascinated by the fantastic things the Bible tells us were done in olden days. There is one bit of science that appears both in the Bible and in legend that is interesting as the story of an electrical gun.

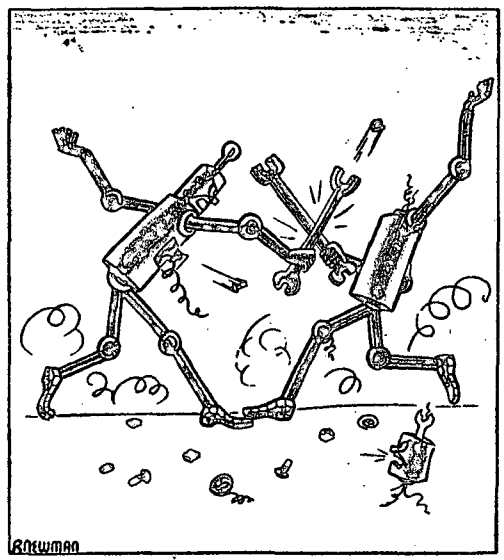
According to legend, Egyptian priests of about 1550 B. C. invented a weapon that worked by lightning. In appearance it resembled a walking stick of modern times.

That it was electrical is indicated by the fact that it was powered in some manner by the friction of the wind blowing against silken curtains.

Though a closely guarded secret, the Hebrew leader, Moses, is supposed to have gotten hold of this electrical gun and used it on several occasions to threaten Pharaoh. It is even said that his miracle of splitting the River Jordan was accomplished by this stick. With the death of Moses, the electrical gun disappeared.

Might not this legendary electrical gun be the stick with which Moses smote the rock and brought forth water? Might it not be the weapon that caused some of the seven plagues?

It's something to think about, anyway.



THERE'S nothing new about time travel either. Or at least in the idea of time travel, and the attempt to do so.

Back in 1437 the Countess Beatress de Formosa tried a voyage back into the past.

Her husband, dashing, headstrong Count Arnoldo, got himself killed in a duel in 1430, and the Countess pined for her lover-husband.

The renowned adventurer-scoundrel, Georges Irescusin, and Friar Ricka promised to carry her back to the year 1416 when she and Arnoldo had been married. They took 15,000 ducats from Beatress for the erection of a "time defier." This consisted of a small room built completely of stone, roughly furnished, on the outskirts of Naples. Half of one wall was covered by a huge clock, the hour hand of which Beatress was instructed to move backward 15,000 times (once for each ducat perhaps). She would then find herself in 1416.

The countess did as she was instructed but no Arnoldo appeared. For months she waited, being fed in the meantime from the outside through a tiny slit in the wall by a faithful old woman retainer.

At last, desperate, she came out and returned to Naples to seek Ricka and Irescusin. But these two had already fled, either to France or England, with a fortune equivalent to $600,000.00 by 1940 standards.

WITH Robert Bloch, the "idea man of science fiction," your editor drove up to Sauk City, Wis. on a fine hot Sunday to call on that peerless writer of weird fiction, August W. Derleth.

Derleth has just built himself an architect's dream of a home on the town's outskirts, where he houses one of the finest sf mag collections.

At present he is at work on a number of ambitious literary projects, among them his personal "Journal" and a monograph on Winsor McKay.

WITH these observations we'll close up the Notebook for this issue. However, we'd like to ask you to give us your opinion on the new FANTASTIC ADVENTURES. We've given you a new type cover, stories aimed straight at fantasy, rather than science, and departments with punch. Our Paganini story is an example. Do you want more? Come on, help edit your mag! *Rap*

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SPECIAL

by

THORNTON AYRE

To Paul Wayne, being wrecked meant only that his comrades faced extermination

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AGENT TO VENUS

PAUL WAYNE returned the salute sharply from the sentry as he strode into G.H.Q., New York Sector. He waited patiently as automatic rays and devices searched every inch of his massive six-foot body, recording the detail of the notes he carried, the weapons his belt contained; indeed, his whole setup, internal and external. G.H.Q. never took chances.

At length he was allowed to move on. Heavily lined, rayproof doors slid aside as he passed the barrier of the last photoelectric cell and stepped into the waste of robot-lighted maps and monstrous radio-television equipment adorning this, the New York headquarters of the vast Earth armies, engaged now in the bitterest struggle they had ever waged.

Wayne came to a stop at the controlling desk. Seven experts at work on instruments disregarded him—but the eighth and centermost man, gray-headed and square-jawed, looked up sharply.

"Squadron Leader Wayne, you are to be entrusted with an exceedingly delicate and dangerous mission. So dangerous, indeed, that you are per-

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mitted to refuse the assignment if you wish."

The commander waited, and as he had anticipated a grim smile broke over Paul Wayne's generously hewn countenance. His glacier-blue eyes even looked amused.

"There is no fear of my refusing, sir. What are your orders?"

The commander reflected for a moment, then he said:

"You are aware that in this mortal battle raging between Venus and Earth, our chances of success are jeopardized by the Venusian blockade. Ringing the system, standing between us and Venus, is this barrier of Venusian space forts and rays. Time and again we've tried to break it—and failed."

"Yes, sir; I know." Wayne recalled his own grim and futile encounters with that impregnable line, hastily but effectively constructed after Earth's initial expeditionary forces had been landed, and thus preventing the sending of reinforcements or supplies.

"This war, Wayne, as most of you spacemen know, is actually ours to win right now. Our expeditionary armies are on Venus and smashing the Venusian resistance everywhere; while here on Earth we have the situation well in hand.

"But a new menace has arisen which may smash us! Venus is a strange world, not thoroughly understood even yet, and its unnatural qualities have created deadly plague among our almost victorious garrisons.

"From the latest reports, it seems our men are dying off like flies from marshland fever—and they will continue to die unless a formula worked out by our Earth chemists reaches them."

Wayne nodded slowly. "I understand, sir."

"Lack of medical experts on Venus meant that an antidote for marsh fever had to be worked out here on Earth," the commander continued.

"That has been done; and it must reach our garrisons on Venus, where it can be put into instant effect. To radio the formula—even if that were possible with the Venusian radio-heterodyne blockade—would be to allow it to fall into enemy hands. They could even use it to cure the Earthmen they have captured, and then use those Earthmen as tools for the furtherance of their own schemes.

"So, a formula must reach Venus, through the blockade, through every line of invasion and defense. A fleet stands no chance against the blockade—but one man *might!* That, Wayne, is the position."

"I'm ready, sir," Paul Wayne said quietly. "What am I to do?"

"YOU will reach Venus by any means you care to adopt and will contact General Fletcher at G.H.Q. there. To the best of our knowledge he is stationed now in the foothills of Temperate Mountains. You have got to find him. Should you die, the formula will not fall into enemy hands.

"No, this formula will be embedded into the flesh of your forearm with microvibrations, and it will only become readable when subjected to Ray 72/5, which General Fletcher has at headquarters. That system is used anyway for sending invisible messages and instructions.

"The message accompanying the formula on your arm will explain who you are and give you full capacity to discharge your mission. You understand?"

"Perfectly, sir. I'm ready."

"Good!" The commander motioned to his expert. Wayne took off his tunic and bared his muscular forearm. A hair remover scored a clean path across the skin. Then Wayne waited with

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jaws clamped tight against the burning pain of the micro-impressor, a web of needle-thin rays that pierced into his skin with searing impact.

Actually, in microscopic form, a slide of the formula was impressed magic-lantern fashion into his flesh. The moment it was over, there was nothing visible; all the young spaceman had for indication was a throbbing pain.

"I knew I picked the right man for the job," the commander said gravely, as Wayne buttoned up his tunic again. "Good luck, Wayne! And remember, the fate of generations depends on your getting through."

Paul Wayne stood back, saluted smartly, then went out with agile strides.

WAYNE'S face was grim as the swift official airway car whirled him over the sprawled labyrinth of the garrisoned city to the spacedrome of the fighter squadrons. For a long time he had suspected that things were not going too well with the Earth army on Venus, and had wondered at the reason.

Now he knew—and he knew too that smashing through that wall between Earth and Venus was going to be an almost superhuman task. There remained for him only the one slim chance that, with his profound knowledge of space tactics, he might find a weak hole and slip through. If he did not. . . .

Wayne's smile only became a little grimmer as he stepped out of the car at the spacedrome and hurried across to his machine. He paused only long enough to transfer the command of his squadron to his next-of-rank; then he clambered through the double airlock of his machine, closed the opening and spun the sealing screws.

He waited a moment or two as he warmed up his rocket-firing chambers, studied the fuel gauge. All set. He settled himself in the highly sprung control chair, clamped his brown hands on the switches, and pulled them over. With the faint hum of cleaving atmosphere Wayne started to rise—swiftly, resistlessly, building up to that vital eighteen miles per second necessary for the initial take-off from Earth's gravitational pull.

Faster—faster— Out into space it hurtled like a giant shuttle. The take-off was always an agony; a grinding strain on heart, brain and nerves. It left Wayne as always with his mouth open, as though after a power dive, his nostrils trickling blood—

But now he was beyond the stratosphere mine field sown at Heaviside Layer by Earth's armies, a mine field anchored to Earth below by enormous attractor towers. Carefully Wayne nosed his ship through the last open mine lane, then tore outward into the vast open freedom of the void. He began to breathe a little more freely.

ROCKETS blazing, still thrusting the ship further away from Earth, Wayne raced onward. He passed giant space cruisers with ray guns snarling at the ready; tight little squads of single fighter machines; great spatial arms dumps and refuelling centers interlinked by their gravity beams.

Yes, the whole setup of this merciless war of 2140 was here—but there was at least a measure of peace since the main onslaught of the original Venusian onrush had been broken.

Everything now depended on whether the Earth army on Venus could master the situation. Which they would, *if* they could be saved from marsh fever.

Wayne's jaw set again as he thought of that; he increased his speed. He progressed at a flogging rate, taking far more punishment from the acceleration

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than was normal. An hour passed, two hours, three. He took five restorative pills, gave himself a little shake, and hurtled on.

At last, hours later, like a line across infinity midway between Earth and Venus, the smudge Paul Wayne had seen from Earth began to revolve itself into a seemingly endless gray chain of armored Venusian space forts, the cleverest and most invincible blockade in history.

It stretched for nearly four thousand miles across space, a wall of death against which Earth fleets had time and time again smashed themselves to destruction in an effort to break it.

Some troop transports, true, had gotten through and had landed the expeditionary armies on Venus. Since then the blockade had been made even more stringent.

As he swept nearer and nearer the barrier, Wayne studied his maps carefully, noted exactly the lay of space ahead. To get round the ends of the barrier was impossible, since it meant exposing himself for a dangerously long time to the guns of the forts.

But according to counterespionage work, the forts had a division between each of them, through which a ship might pass if it was prepared to meet the network of defense ships beyond.

Again, the forts had an unpleasant habit of closing up to nip any invading ship between their ponderous masses.

Wayne's eyes narrowed. The only chance was speed—a terrific burst of impetus to defeat the focus of the ray guns, then an ultimate dive between the forts before they could close on him. Afterward— Well, fight it out!

His plan decided, the young space fighter set the automatic sights on his guns, by which they would fire their devastating charges at whatever crossed their magnetic paths. Then he built speed upon speed and was crushed back into his chair by the frightful velocity, his eyes glued to that ever-spreading, ever-widening gray wall in front of him.

The ultimate dive he intended taking was directed toward one black line cutting right ahead of him. Seven miles of it, with death for the reward if he miscalculated!

Faster—faster! Then the void around Wayne was ablaze suddenly with disintegrator beams. He had been sighted; but by now his speed was so tremendous, even the fast-sighting guns of the enemy had their work cut out to focus upon him.

Wayne heard two outer projections on his ship snap and bang as rays struck home. He depressed the release switches on his own guns immediately and hurled a barrage of crackling death on either side of him—literally blasted his way like a living torch through the squad of Venusian fighters that swept forward to meet him.

The gap between the space forts was dead ahead now. Wayne dived for it; and even as he flicked past those deadly walls, he saw them moving ponderously inward. With only a few feet to spare he was through, fighting madly now with a boiling scum of defensive machines.

HIS guns still rattled away furiously, taking up their automatic feeds and giving the full blast of their neutron-firing chambers. Wayne saw several of the enemy ships glow, then explode violently. He twisted and dodged and swung, up and down, right and left, his eyes fixed right ahead of him. He was being outmaneuvered, and knew it. Little by little he was being forced aside from his direct route.

Flame cannons pumped destruction toward him. Wayne switched on the robot control and scrambled hurriedly

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into his space suit, then resumed his seat at the controls. His action had not been a moment too soon, for an upper plate of his machine suddenly ripped away violently under a direct ray hit.

The air pressure sank instantly to zero. Safe in his space suit he drove onward, or tried to; but by this time the enemy had beaten him. More and more he was being forced to one side. His anxious gaze found itself looking now not at Venus but at the artificial asteroid X/47, better known as "the Pimple," the much-beleagured outpost where a few Earthlings still held a vital space communication line. Down there he might stand a chance of sorting himself out.

He started toward it—then a battering onslaught from the Venusian machines caught up with him again, and his ship cracked clean in half! The front half of the machine was torn apart as the wrecked pursuit ship hurtled piecemeal down toward the asteroid.

Paul Wayne twisted around and clamped on his life-preserving mechanism; then he leapt for it. The preserver's ray-recoil system knocked him free of the falling debris and allowed him to sink, as in old-time parachute fashion, to the nearest center of gravity. He fell swiftly, using the old trick of keeping the ship's debris between himself and the enemy to avoid further attack.

It seemed the Venusians had assumed he had been killed in the final wreck of his ship, however, for they were now heading away swiftly back to their bases.

Below, the lush green of the asteroid rose to meet him, spreading ever larger under its blanket of artificially created atmosphere. At the precise moment Wayne gave his foot clips the recoil and saved himself a violent landing. He dropped in the midst of dense fernlike vegetation, switched off his apparatus and gazed upward with a look of prayerful relief.

CHAPTER II

Doomed Outpost

ALMOST at once Paul Wayne became aware of the lightness of slight gravitation. Through the treetops he could see that invincible wall of gray in the blue-black sky. Carefully he unscrewed his helmet and sniffed the air. It was thin, but breathable.

Two things were uppermost in his mind right now. He was alive and unhurt and he was behind the blockade barrier. Somewhere on this asteroid, an Earth unit was still holding out against repeated onslaughts from the Venusians. If it were possible to reach it and get another space machine with which to continue his urgent mission—

"Hi'ya, pal! Waiting for an airbus?"

"Huh? What?" Wayne whirled around as the gruff voice reached him. In a moment his hand was at his ray gun, then he relaxed a little and waited.

A man in a tattered, vegetation-juice stained uniform was ambling into the clearing. He had unkempt brown hair, a big red face that looked entirely unconcerned, and a big paunch in front. He was quite without weapons and walked with his hands in his pants pockets.

"Relax, lad," he invited, fixing a blue eye on the gun. "What do you think I am? A Venusian?"

"Just who are you, anyway?" Wayne demanded, eyeing him. "From your uniform, you're from an Earth unit—"

"Yeah—sure! 'Least I was until the war caught up on me and I got taken prisoner. I rayed my way out of a convict ship and escaped in a safety machine to this Pimple. Since then—"

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He eyed the sky reflectively. "Well, since then I've just wandered around, neither going back to a garrison or being taken prisoner. I'm a nomadic sort of guy, see? Gilby's the name—but you can call me 'Paddles.' Most folks do."

"In other words," Wayne said grimly, "you're a deserter. I've seen your face posted up at G.H.Q."

Paddles beamed. "Guess my fame's spread, eh? S'pose I am a deserter, but it's more interesting wandering around as a space tourist than firing a ray gun at a collection of Venusians. So I paddles around where and how I pleases. You're sorta lucky, joining up with me."

"Yes?" Wayne was unconvinced.

"Sure! I saw you take that dive from beyond the line up there, and I don't have to be a telepathist to figure you're trying to reach Venus. You won't—not in half a ship," and his blue eyes wandered to where the wreckage had fallen.

Wayne said briefly, "I'm on an urgent mission. What I've got to do right now is contact the one remaining garrison on this asteroid."

"Then you're nuts," Paddles sighed, leaning indolently against a tree. "The garrison's been besieged by Venusian raids for weeks now, and so far it's held out. But the latest I hear is that two Earth traitors are scheming with the Venusians to make a complete raid.

"You'd never get anywhere near that last outpost without being shot down." Paddles shrugged, spat idly. "Seems to me kinda silly, holding onto that bit of metal citadel. A few soldiers, the governor and his daughter. . . . So what? Might as well hand things over and save their skins."

"Maybe they're loyal, and you're not!" Wayne snapped, dragging Paddles upright from the tree. "You've gotten the wrong guy to preach that sort of defeatism to, Paddles. We're going to that outpost, and quick. Since you know where it is, you can take me there."

PADDLES shrugged, his eyes on the gun again. He ambled toward the forest with Wayne beside him.

"Okay, if you want to get shot," he growled. "And watch where you're going. Place is full of ground traps. I told you that you were lucky to meet up with me."

Wayne found out what was meant by ground traps as they went along. Venusian mines were everywhere, cleverly laid and able to deal out instant death, had not the indolent Paddles known the forest trail so intimately.

Now and again, trained as a ground soldier, Paddles would stop and glance quickly up and down the dim-lit forest, then he would duck and drag Wayne down with him. Sure enough a party of Venusian guards, heavily armed, would come clumping past. They were queer creatures anyway — eight feet tall, somewhat like Earth people in build, with gaunt cadaverlike faces giving them an anything but wholesome appearance.

"Seems like we're none too safe around here," Wayne murmured, as they went on again.

"Safe!" Paddles gave a snort. "You don't know it, lad, but we're right in enemy territory. Everything but that one north outpost belongs to 'em. But don't worry; I've monkeyed around on this Pimple for a month and never been seen. We're safe enough . . . But I still think you're crazy!"

Owing to the dim light, they escaped molestation and covered the distance to the outpost in double-quick time, thanks to the light gravity permitting them to leap over every obstacle. The outpost citadel appeared suddenly on the horizon, as things always do in a

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world of infinite smallness. Paddles came to a halt in the clearing facing it, and seemed to reflect.

"Notice it's not being surrounded by ground forces?" he asked. "That means it's armed to the teeth. All the raids are made by air. If you want to risk going up to it, you try it—I'm out!"

Wayne studied it. It was rather like a vast metal cube, with a wall of defensive weapons all around it. On the roof of the cube were more ray cannons, grimly ready.

"Think they're likely to have a space ship?" Wayne asked briefly.

"Search me!" Paddles shrugged fleshy shoulders. "I guess—"

He broke off, tensing at the sudden deep thunder of rocket tubes. In a few seconds it became a devastating, inhuman roar.

"Down!" he gasped, flinging Wayne flat. "Warships! A raid!"

Pressed to the ground, they lifted their heads slightly and watched some twenty massive Venusian warships head straight for the solitary citadel. What happened afterward was the quickest and most deadly onslaught Wayne had ever seen.

Indeed, so quick was the attack, the automatic weapons guarding the place had hardly a chance to focus before there descended from the raiders a withering fire of beams. The metal defensive walls flowed and exploded outward; masses of metal went flying to an enormous distance in the light gravity. The whole mass of the citadel became suddenly the center of the most incredible vortex of destruction and flame.

DEBRIS raining upon them, Wayne and Paddles lay flat on their stomachs. Then gradually the onslaught died away. Paddles looked up, his big face grim.

"So they finally got it," he muttered. "And I guess they could only do that if they knew exactly what spot to approach from, to avoid the defense. Those two damned Earth traitors must have given the Venusians the right dope. Well, there's your citadel for you, lad! Now what? The Venusians will close in their ground forces and take it."

"Say!" Wayne gripped his arm and pointed to the ruins. "Who's that? I thought I saw somebody moving— Yes! It's a girl!"

Paddles looked surprised for a moment, then he followed Wayne as the pilot hurried across to the remains of the outpost. The solitary girl, dressed in defense service kit, swung around sharply as she heard the footsteps. Instantly her hand whipped out a ray gun and held it steady.

"Stand right where you are!" she commanded. "I want a few words with you two rats before I finish you off. You filthy, rotten, despicable traitors!" she finished venomously.

Wayne looked at her grimly. Her voice was shaken with anger and grief, her violet-blue eyes misted with tears. She was a healthy, attractive girl, with blond hair that curled at the ends and a firm little chin.

"Listen, kid—" Paddles began, then he jumped back and looked rueful as she flashed her gun toward him.

"Shut up, you lumbering pig! Dad and I—in fact, everyone of those now lying dead in this ruin—knew you two traitors would get the place in the end. I alone escaped. You two signalled the attack and came to see what happened, eh? Well—look! Enjoy yourself, in the few precious seconds you've got left to you! You killed my father, and the soldiers—so I'll kill the pair of you!"

Wayne waited in silence for a moment, amazed at the cold intensity of

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her hate, then with a sudden lightning movement he snatched the gun out of her hand. She nursed her fingers for a moment and eyed him contemptuously.

"Well, go on!" she snapped. "Why don't you shoot? I might have known I'd be no match for a hefty brute like you!"

"You've got this all wrong," Wayne said grimly. "Neither of us are traitors. But I've no time to explain that now: the Venusian ground forces may close in at any moment. What I want is a space ship, if you got one."

The girl's only response was to fold her arms and smile cynically.

"Now listen—" Wayne began urgently. Then he stood rooted in amazement as Paddles abruptly snatched the gun from him, whirled it around and fired twice with deadly accuracy. Two men suddenly toppled from above the ramparts of a nearby mass of debris, crashing nearly at the trio's feet.

"Lucky I spotted 'em!" Paddles grinned, handing the gun back. "As for you, young lady, I guess your traitors are right here." He turned the corpses over with his boot. "Yep! Earth uniforms!"

THE girl stared down at them speechlessly for a moment, then swung back to Wayne. He gave her a grim smile.

"Saves me having to convince you, anyway," he said briefly. "I'm Squadron Leader Paul Wayne of New York Space Squadron. You can call this guy here Paddles."

"I—I—" She hesitated. "I must have gotten it all wrong! Only it *looked* so bad—I'm Ethel Waldon, daughter of the governor of this asteroid," she hurried on. "Or rather, *late* governor—"

"Yes, yes, I know," Wayne said quickly, gripping her arm. "You have my deepest sympathy. But right now, it's important we get out of here. Have you a space ship or not? I've got to reach Venus somehow."

"Venus?" Ethel Waldon looked briefly surprised, then said quickly, "There is a space ship, yes. Dad was saving it for personal use if all our defense efforts failed. I don't know if we can get it free after this raid—"

She turned, and Wayne and Paddles followed her quickly through the ruins of the citadel to where a fairly large space flyer lay, half buried under a wilderness of smashed girders and melted lumps of metal. Wayne eyed the ruins for a moment or two, then pulled his largest disrupter from his belt and went to work. By degrees he blasted a clear tunnel through the debris to the ship's airlock.

"Inside," he said, catching the girl's arm. "We'll shake this lot off by our own power if we're all fueled up."

"Everything's set," the girl said quickly. "Dad took no chances. There are even disguises aboard."

Paddles waddled into the control room behind the two and glanced around in approval.

"Hmm— Not bad! And this is where I say 'good-by' to the Pimple. Too bad; I was beginning to enjoy it."

He turned and slammed shut the airlock, then waited as Wayne settled himself at the control board.

The rockets roared, but for a moment or two the ship trembled and staggered helplessly in its efforts to free itself. Then all of a sudden it succeeded, and with a mighty *swoosh!* that hurled Ethel and Paddles to the floor, it tore free and whizzed upward in a wild arc. Instantly Wayne got it under control, gazed back at the disappearing Pimple in the void.

"Rough, but necessary," Paddles commented, helping the girl up. Then

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he frowned. "It's what we're going to get into that worries me. We—"

"You say you're heading for Venus?" The girl went over to Wayne and regarded him anxiously.

"Yeah. Any objections?"

"*I* haven't—but do you know what you're getting into?"

"Sure; but it can't be any worse than the blockade, and I got through that."

"It can be far worse!" she retorted. "Space is infested with Venusian examination squads all the way to Venus. There's only one way to defeat them, and that's by the plan Dad and I devised for just such an emergency as this."

"Well?" Wayne stared ahead. In the dim distance he could already see several Venusian guard ships hurtling through the infinite, obviously intent on impending examination.

"Disguise," the girl said. "There's a Venusian disguise aboard, and an Earth disguise too. The Earth one is no use to us in this case, of course—but if you became a Venusian and Paddles and I became your apparent captives, we might make it."

"Have to be a damn good disguise to make me look like an eight-foot cadaver," Wayne grunted.

"It *is* good! See—I'll show you! The idea of captives and captor should swing things in our favor. That was how Dad and I reckoned it, anyway."

CHAPTER III

Perilous Flight

TURNING aside, the girl opened a locker and drew forth something that looked like a deflated balloon effigy from a fête day. As it lay on the floor Paddles and Wayne stared at it amazedly.

"What *is* it?" Wayne demanded. "Looks like a Venusian without his insides!"

"It is," the girl said quietly. "Dad was a scientist as well as a governor: he had to be, in order to be governor, anyway. Old-time taxidermists used to dry pelts of animals. Modern scientists stuff human beings in the place of wax effigies; we know that. This skin was once owned by a Venusian soldier.

"All you've got to do is get inside it as you would into a space suit and let me fasten you up. Easy, isn't it? Framework will attend to the lower part of the legs where you lose stature. Dad had it all worked out."

"Good for Dad!" Wayne murmured, still wondering. Then he glanced sharply at Paddles. "You drive this crate, Paddles?"

"Sure!" He took the seat Wayne vacated and gripped the controls.

Wayne clambered into the skin and the girl closed up the various zipping devices. He found himself perched on two artificial feet at the leg extremities, and his eyes peered through the eyeholes in the face.

Certainly to the two surveying him he looked like the real thing, completely Venusian-suited, towering eight feet high, his breadth of shoulder minimized to normal by the extra height. At length the girl fixed the ray gun—the special Venusian type—in his artificial fingers.

"You'll do," Paddles commented briefly, then gazed ahead again.

"One thing," the girl said, as Wayne moved clumsily. "Keep away from all sources of heat—those rocket chambers, for example. The tanning preparation melts easily; that's its one fault. So remember! Otherwise you're quite safe."

"I hope!" Wayne muttered. Then he glanced around with a start as a violet beam suddenly bathed the ship in its radiance. He knew what that

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meant. It was the universal STOP signal used throughout the void.

He signalled Paddles briefly, and in response Paddles gave a thrust to the forward rockets that gradually brought the machine to a standstill. A guard ship came cruising up, drew alongside.

"Open your airlocks!" commanded a harsh Venusian voice over the space radio, permanently open for messages. "Stand by for examination!"

The airlocks were opened one after the other so no air could escape. Three giant Venusians, complete with leveled ray guns, entered and gazed around.

"Who are these two people?" The narrow-faced, cold-eyed officer looked at Wayne sharply as he spoke in Venusian.

"Prisoners," Wayne replied briefly, choosing the words in the language he could best pronounce. "Asteroid X/47 has fallen to our gallant forces and these were the last two Earthlings remaining there. I shall take them through to Venus."

"I see." The officer's tawny eyes studied Wayne keenly, with such intensity that Wayne began to feel his scalp prickle. Then with sudden curtness the officer snapped:

"What detachment are you from?"

WAYNE hesitated only a split second.

"Asteroid Detachment, of course. This ship belonged to the last of the Earth forces."

"Hm—!" The officer moved forward, and perforce Wayne moved back toward the window. He hesitated as he felt the pouring sunshine warm the back of his head through the skin. He saw Ethel Waldon's face become suddenly drawn and anxious.

"Suppose," the officer said, his eyes still narrowed suspiciously, "we go into this more thoroughly. I want the details of this capture for one thing; your own number and name, for another."

He broke off abruptly, his eyes suddenly sharpening. Wayne felt ever-increasing heat on the back of his neck and head, then the sting of hot wax preparation as it melted inward.

"Disguise!" the officer barked out suddenly. "I thought so!"

He got no further than that, for with one mighty uppercut of his false fist Wayne lashed the Venusian under the jaw and sent him sprawling. His gun sailed through the air and landed in Paddles' outflung hand. He bundled Ethel out of the line of fire and aimed at the guards. But they fired first, and the ray from one gun shot the weapon clean out of Paddles' fist.

But in those precious seconds of diversion, Wayne had blundered across the control chamber. He hurled himself forward in a mighty dive, sending both men—their attention on Paddles—reeling toward the airlock. They went through it helplessly into the space beyond, came up sharp against the outer lock.

Ethel snatched up the gun Paddles' hand had released and forced the remaining officer to his feet.

"Out!" Wayne ordered curtly. "Join your pals in the safety gap and be quick about it!" He administered a kick to help the Venusian on his way, then shouted after him, "You guys have twenty seconds to get on your portable space suits. Then I'll open the second lock to space!"

With that he slammed the inner lock, scrambled out of his disguise and hurried to the control board. With a roar he sent the ship jolting forward, and as he had hoped, the waiting guard ship, unaware of what was transpiring, was simply left standing. Wayne waited the twenty seconds, then threw the switch that opened the outer airlock.

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He looked back with grim eyes as three space-suited forms were projected into space by the outflowing vortex of air release. They began to float slowly toward their own now slowly moving guard ship.

"Guess you only hit out just in time, lad," Paddles murmured, shaking his head reflectively. "That disguise was melting like hell. Write me down as a killjoy if you like, but I don't see we're much better off. They'll follow. To quote the twentieth century, the heat's on!"

Wayne gave a grim nod. "Yeah, they'll follow us—but they'll be way behind. They'll have to collect those three guards first and then catch up on us."

He built up speed gradually, stared at the glowing ball of Venus ahead.

"We've broken the second barrier, anyway," he said. "This time we get through to Venus—or crack up. But I guess I'm selfish. I've no right to ask you to take this risk, Miss Waldon. You'd still have a chance as a prisoner of war. Tagging along with me, you've got none."

THE girl smiled faintly. "None? You seem to think you can reach Venus; so forget all about me." She turned to the radio instruments. "I'm going through with this, now we've gotten started. And I've an idea too. Those guards will radio the other forces around Venus to block us. At least they'll try to. A heterodyne beam may fix 'em. We can use it effectively too, since we're between them and the receiving end."

She settled herself before the radio apparatus and busied herself with its intricacies. The humming of a small but massively strong power engine pervaded the chamber as she went to work. At last she turned with a smile of triumph.

"That fixes our friends!" She glanced back at the far distance where the guard ship had now taken up the chase and was spinning through space at top speed. Even so, the gap was not narrowing as Wayne built up his own acceleration inexorably.

It crushed Paddles and the girl back in their chairs with its awful force, dewed their faces in perspiration, gripped their hearts and lungs in an iron band. At such a frantic pace, the mighty globe of Venus soon began to assume space-filling proportions, changing from a globe to a landscape of blinding white cloud. Out of the cloud, shooting like salmon from an ocean of cotton wool, came the investigating ships of the Venusian defensive fleet.

Wayne set his jaws and glanced at the taut faces on either side of him.

"We're going through!" he announced grimly. "You're sure that heterodyne will cut off the radio from the guard behind us?"

"Certain!" The girl's voice was laboring under effort. "These boys ahead can only *think* we're fugitives; they can't be sure. If we drive right through them, we might stand a chance —the *only* chance, I guess."

"Okay! Paddles, if you know anything about guns, chuck your two hundred and seventy pounds in front of those two there!"

"*If* I know!" Paddles gave a contemptuous sniff, then heaved his vast bulk over to action station. Presently he grinned with boyish delight as a trailing stream of six ships crossed the gunsights. Wayne saw them too, turned swiftly in a left arc and dived like a plummet for the cotton wool far below. Faster—faster—until the outside of the ship began to scream like a top with the impact of sudden atmosphere.

To Ethel, that dive seemed like a plunge to hell. She hung onto her seat,

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her eyes fixed on that fast-rising sea of white, her head reeling from the headlong fall. Her left ear was numbed suddenly, as Paddles swung his automatic guns to action and hurled a withering protective fire of neutrons on either side of him.

Two of the pursuing craft caught the blast amidships, that much Wayne knew; then, like a falling meteor their ship plunged through the rest of the scattering defenders and into the clouds. Thick white mist instantly blanketed everything.

Eyes flashing over his instruments as he flew blind, Wayne swung the ship around, followed the astromap immediately under his controls. By its aid he knew almost exactly where he was, and in a moment or two the escaping ship burst from below the clouds onto the dense verdure of the Venusian super-tropical forest.

WAYNE'S speed slowing down, he whizzed over the top of gargantuan trees, across marshes and interlaced streams of steamy water, across brackish wilderness, and so at last to an immense clearing in the forest itself. He twisted and turned, shot between vast trees with inches to spare, then landed with a crash that sent soil and subsoil spouting upward in a fountain. The ship rocked to a standstill.

"Wow!" Paddles breathed, relaxing and drawing his torn cuff across his brow. "Was that something! Lad, you've not much to learn in driving a space tub, I'll tell you!"

Wayne got up hastily, massaged his stiff limbs.

"We've got to get moving as quickly as we can," he said briefly, tightening his weapon belt. "That guard ship will catch up on us at any time. The rest we do on foot. Temperate Mountains are ten miles to the north and that's the spot I want. Let's go!"

He turned and flung open the air-locks. They bundled outside into the crushing heat, began to move swiftly under the eternally clouded sky of the planet. Using his smaller ray gun, Wayne blasted the way ahead of them, withering the tangled mass of vines and interlaced undergrowth that sought to bar their progress.

Presently Ethel said, "Wouldn't it have been easier to land near Temperate Mountains and get this business over with?"

"No. For one thing, there's no clearing, according to my map; and for another a ship would attract attention. On foot we can probably make it. 'Least I can. Somehow I've got to reach General Fletcher—"

Wayne broke off and glanced upward. The trees had thinned here. He frowned at a flock of circling creatures like pterodactyls against the drifting white backdrop of sky.

"Carrion moths," Paddles growled, eying them too. "Hoverin' up there in the hope we'll drop dead, then they can come down and pick us clean. These Venusian vultures give me the willies."

"And a catastrophe for us!" Wayne snapped. "Those damned guards know where we are from, watching the birds! The Venusians naturally know their own planet inside out— We've got to hurry! Come on!"

They advanced, but not hurriedly. That was impossible. The awful oven-like temperature crushed them into leaden weariness.

It was perhaps an hour later when they heard the rumble and thunder of distant battle. Here in the jungle all was quiet enough; but as they well knew, the final conflict for the triumph of Venus or Earth in this war was being fought out in the Hotlands of this strange planet with mammoth instru-

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ments of steel and destruction.

The nearer the trio moved toward the mighty range of Temperate Mountains, marking the barrier chain between the temperate and Hotland zones, the louder became the din, until it was an incessant roll that made the ground shake.

"Guess we'll stop here awhile," Wayne said at last, throwing down his pack thankfully. "We ought to be safe until dusk, anyway, and when that comes I can strike north through the jungle here and so across the enemy-occupied territory to General Fletcher's headquarters."

Paddles leaned back against a tree and rolled a tabloid concentrate around his tongue.

"I s'pose you won't tell us just *why* you're taking all this risk?"

"I can't. But believe me, it's urgent!"

"It must be, to risk cracking the blockade and defense lines," the girl said seriously, putting down her water flask. "You've plenty of nerve, Mister," she added, smiling.

PAUL WAYNE shrugged. "Nerve enough to try and save an army that's being slaughtered by marsh fever instead of enemy rays." He leaned back and gave a tight little smile. "You'll get me talking if I'm not careful, and there's got to be none of that. What worries me really is the danger to you, Ethel—I mean, Miss Waldon," he stammered. "You may get killed."

"I liked 'Ethel' much better," she said naively; then shrugging, "As for my perhaps getting killed, so what? If I can help you, I may have something to live for. If you fail, I might as well be dead anyway as at the mercy of a Venusian conquest."

"Philosophy of diamond brightness," Paddles opined lazily.

For a while silence fell between them, then Wayne unfastened his portable radio and switched it on.

"May as well see if the garrison's sending out any news," he said briefly, and after a second or two a voice came in, in mid-sentence.

". . . and we shall continue to maintain our resistance to the last man! Despite the virulence of the fever that has struck so many of us down, an ace space pilot from Earth is even now on his way with an antidote which can save us. Men, maintain courage! We shall yet win! We shall—"

Wayne switched off, his face grim.

"That was a private message to the Earth forces," he muttered. "My radio is tuned to that one wavelength. But if the Venusians have by now tapped that wavelength, as is more than probable, they'll know just what I'm aiming at! That makes things more urgent than ever—Come on, we've got to move again, quick!"

They all got to their feet hurriedly, then stopped buckling on their kit as a harsh voice rang out in badly accented English:

"Stand right where you are, the three of you!"

CHAPTER IV

To the Death

THE trio turned very slowly and saw the Venusian officer they had tricked aboard the space ship, together with his two companions. He came forward slowly, his ugly face set and resolute.

"Better not try any tricks," he advised briefly. "My job is to take the three of you—dead or alive. And I'm going to do it! You can thank the carrion moths for showing me where you were—"

That was as far as he got. He had

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advanced slowly while talking, ray gun in his hand; and in those moments Wayne had clearly realized that Paddles, the girl and he himself were face to face with death. He lunged suddenly, regardless of peril, in a long flying tackle, relying solely on his lesser height to dodge the beam of the ray gun—

And he succeeded, bringing the officer crashing to the ground! Wayne tried to fire his gun, but at the identical moment the girl's heavy bootheel accidentally crashed down on his hand and brought a howl of anguish from him.

In those seconds Paddles moved too, snatched Wayne's gun from his belt and swung it savagely at the other guards. He got one of them clean in the face, dropped him with a cinder for a head. The other Venusian fired, gouged the ground a foot from Paddles' massive body.

Paddles fired again—but no ray-flash came forth. The gun had jammed at the vital moment. In a second he flung himself flat, and just missed the vicious beam that flashed past his ear. He knew it was only a matter of split seconds to death—

Then something else happened. The clearing suddenly became a fluttering hell of wings.

"Carrion moths!" Ethel shouted, shielding her face from their wild swervings and buffetings. "Are they quick to nose out a dead body!"

Paddles got up and covered her protectingly, backed away as the birds whizzed downward on the corpse of the dead officer. The remaining Venusian with the ray gun turned away from the onslaught and headed for the safety of the thicker jungle. Wayne for his part got to his feet immediately and left the officer he had knocked out sprawled in the loam. He came hurrying across the clearing with arms upflung across his head.

"Out!" he shouted. "Quick! Those moths don't attack living things as a rule, but they might make mistakes in the confusion."

The three of them turned and went hurrying on through the jungle, pack left behind them. They hacked and blazed their way, moving ever nearer to the rumble and thunder of battle that marked the situation of Temperate Mountains.

Then suddenly, with the devastating swiftness common to that second world, night fell. No twilight. Just an instant change into the 720-hour moonless dark of Venus. Paul Wayne came to a halt in the pitchy black, blinking.

"You two okay?" he demanded.

"Yeah," came Paddles' laconic voice. "I've got Miss Waldon."

They waited a moment, accustoming their eyes and gazing toward the intermittent flashings from the mountain range visible through the trees—volcanic lightning. Then, torch in hand, Wayne started their march again.

IN and out, out and in they went, stumbling here, crawling there, through pits of Stygian dark, leaping gurgling streams, wading knee-deep through weed-choked morasses fetid with feverish miasma — and so on to more solid ground again. Ever nearer came the rumble of battle from beyond the mountains, and above it now the thin eternal hum of the hurricanes raging perpetually at the heights of the barrier, where the conflict of heat and cold twisted itself into nameless fury and roared in bolts of lightning through unscaled clefts.

At the last river barrier Wayne went first, edging his way across, keeping his feet with difficulty. Halfway across he stumbled and went to his knees, his torch flying out of his grip. It was disaster in more senses than one.

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Behind him, plunged into dark, Paddles lost his balance and released the girl's arm. Her desperate cry sounded for a moment, then was drowned out in the furious roar of the waters as they boiled away to a none too distant cataract.

"Ethel!" Wayne screamed desperately, bracing himself against the flood. "Ethel!"

He peered helplessly into the absolute darkness, but there came no answering shout. He turned, started to move further downriver, then Paddles' grip pulled him back.

"Easy, lad!" he panted. "You can't make it! You'll waste hours trying to find her—and anyway, it's a cat in hell's chance with that Niagara ahead. Face up to it!"

"What in hell are you talking about?" Wayne blazed. "I can't let her just—"

"You've got to go on! You've your duty to do! You keep going and I'll look around for her. Go on! I'll find you later, somehow. . . ."

Wayne hesitated a moment, then he got a grip on himself.

"Okay," he said bitterly. "For God's sake, don't leave here without finding her! If all goes well I'll see you at G. H. Q. If not— Well, deserter or otherwise you're okay by me."

He gripped the fat hand warmly for a moment, then turned and floundered across the waters to firmer ground.

As he blundered onward through the jungle again, Wayne was surprised to find himself so concerned about the girl, considering the brief time he had known her. Now he realized that she had been something more than a friend and a comrade in danger. She meant far more than that . . . He shook all romantic thoughts out of his mind, concentrated on nothing save the duty he had to fulfill.

Two things began to impress him as he went on. For one thing, it was pretty certain that General Fletcher would be awaiting him; that would make his approach to Temperate Mountains G.H.Q. much easier. For another thing, he was puzzled by the lack of pursuit by the Venusian guard he had beaten up. The carrion moths would not have attacked the man while he still lived.

"Must have knocked him colder than I thought," Wayne muttered to himself; and then began to hurry his pace, as he found the jungle thinning at last and saw for the first time clearly the stupendous luminescent mass of Temperate Mountains, right before him on the short rocky plateau.

They were impressive, awe-inspiring, lit up and down their upper reaches with the play of atmospheric lightning. The noise of battle from beyond them was now like the growling of hell itself.

WAYNE stopped a moment, eyes straining ahead through the flashing glow. After a while he could dimly distinguish the solitary metal blockhouse, where his maps back on Earth had shown him General Fletcher's headquarters were situated. There were no guards—but that did not surprise him. The place was undoubtedly riddled with automatic defenses.

Finally he switched on the tiny portable emergency radio he had in his belt, an instrument only useful over short distance. In the earphone there was an instant response in the Universal language.

"Pilot Paul Wayne reporting, sir," Wayne said briefly. "I have a vital message to—"

"Yes, yes!" the voice of the general broke in quickly. "You will have free entry into the headquarters. Come immediately."

"Yes, sir."

Wayne got up and went swiftly across

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the darkened plateau, glancing from right to left. An absence of units going to and fro from headquarters puzzled him for a moment; then he dismissed it and hurried on, straight past the automatic guard, its fire withheld since it was controlled from inside G.H.Q. The rayproof door of the place opened automatically and Wayne strode thankfully into the great office beyond.

To his surprise only the general himself was present, seated at the map-strewn desk. The lights were so placed that he was mainly in shadow.

Wayne came to a halt, saluted, eyed the man steadily.

"I was instructed to find you, sir, by Earth G.H.Q., New York Sector—"

"Yes, yes, I know," the general snapped. "You have a fever antidote. Very well—hand it over!"

Wayne hesitated. This was hardly the welcome he had expected; and besides, there was something queer about the general's expression—an immobile, frozen look. Again, the general's face where it was nearest the warmth of the desk light looked oddly greasy, while the other side was perfectly normal.

Wayne moved his hand, as though to reach inside his tattered tunic, but instead he made a lightning movement. He knew full well the consequences of his action if his guess was wrong, but it was worth the risk. He slapped the general clean in the face! At the same moment he doubled his fingers inward and pulled—

The general's face *tore!*

"Just as I figured!" Wayne snapped—but before he could reach his belt, he found the "general's" gun directed at him steadily. With his free hand the "general" tore away the rest of his disguise and revealed himself as the Venusian officer who had been knocked out.

"You're no fool, are you, Earthman?" he asked grimly, rising to his full immense height. "Let me explain this little surprise. I recovered from your attack upon me and returned to my ship. In the interval, your ship had been examined and a Venusian disguise found.

"Also, a radio message had been picked up from Earth G.H.Q. on Venus here, before it fell into our hands. I knew for the first time that your aim was to get a serum formula through for marsh fever. I knew you would come here, so I came on ahead in my space ship, disguised. I fancied I might obtain the formula from you without trouble. As it is— Well, you have compelled me to violence, after all."

PAUL WAYNE smiled crookedly. "And General Fletcher?"

"General Fletcher is — elsewhere. Earth G.H.Q. here was captured by us many hours ago . . . Hand over that serum formula quick!"

Wayne shook his head. "You can shoot me first. In fact, I don't see why you haven't done so already. All you want is to stop me getting through to General Fletcher, isn't it?"

"I want that serum formula for our own use!" the officer retorted. "When we have won this war and have subjugated Earthlings to our will, we want them to work, not die like flies. My commander requires that formula in order to make Earthlings capable of working for us. Your own chemists—obstinate fools—would die rather than reveal the secret of the formula. Upon you therefore depends everything. *Where is it?*"

Wayne's eyes narrowed. "You know my answer!"

"Very well; sit down!"

Wayne obeyed slowly and the officer turned to a bank of instruments.

"Among these," he said grimly, "is a lethal probe. You know what that can do. It can *make* you talk and—"

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"And what?" asked a languid voice from the doorway; then curtly, "Put 'em up, death's-head! I'm in no mood for games!"

Wayne twisted around joyfully, leapt from his chair as he beheld Paddles standing behind them, a ray gun in each hand—though heaven knew where he had obtained them.

"Outside, Wayne," he said briefly, jerking his head. "I'll join you."

Wayne obeyed, waiting in the dark for five minutes until Paddles came out and joined him. Without a word Paddles hurried him beyond the reaches of the headquarters. Then he relaxed a little.

"Tied him up and socked him once; it'll keep him quiet for hours," he said briefly. "Kind of lucky I turned up, eh? I still don't know how I got past the automatic guard—but I did."

"Simply explained," Wayne said. "The officer switched off the automatic guard to let me through and didn't switch it on again! Whole setup was a trick, as you've probably gathered. But look, where'd you spring from? How did you get your guns?"

"Easy. After I'd gotten out of the river, I ran into a Venusian guard. I got him first tackle and frisked his guns. Did more'n that too! He told me just where General Fletcher really is—seems he and most of the garrison escaped—and I figured you had walked into a whole packet of trouble. So along I came."

Paddles pointed to a distant dimly lighted stronghold in the foothills. "Fletcher's over there! His temporary headquarters."

Wayne glanced, then caught Paddles' shoulder.

"Look, about Ethel Waldon. You mean you didn't—"

"I didn't find her, lad," Paddles said quietly. "And further down the river it was a hundred percent rocks Don't see how anybody could survive it."

For a long time Wayne was silent; then he shrugged resignedly.

"Okay; you did your best, I know. Let's go!"

They went on together, stopping ever and again to dodge an alert Venusian patrol, gradually working their way past the massive boulders of the mountainside until they were directly within the Earth-zone. No sooner were they in it completely, however, before the defensive units came to life, actuated by photoelectric cells. As though from nowhere a party of armed Earthmen appeared, led by a single sharp-faced officer.

"WHAT'S your business here?" he asked shortly, eying the two tattered men keenly.

"I'm Squadron Leader Wayne, New York Sector," Wayne said quickly. "The general's expecting me. But it's a private mission, so you probably won't know anything about it. I've got to see General Fletcher!"

"Yeah?" The officer's eyes narrowed in the flood of lights that came up. "I know you," he went on, studying Paddles. "Deserter from the Earth army; your face has been circularized to all headquarters. Penalty for desertion is death! As for you, Pilot Whatever-You-Call Yourself, you're in the same spot for aiding him!"

Wayne started. "Now wait a minute, man, I'm in earnest! This is a matter of life and death! I *demand* to see General Fletcher!"

"The general isn't interested in deserters. I can attend to this quite adequately. Guard, move these two men over there. . . ."

The more Wayne protested, the worse his position seemed to get. Even his ripped tunic provided no evidence for

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his words, and since Paddles was a known deserter—

"Looks like I got you in a spot," Paddles said glumly. "Serves me right. I should have stopped back on the Pimple and taken my chance—"

"Silence there!" the guard snapped. Then the officer called a halt and came forward. The two prisoners glanced rearward and found they were ominously near a metal wall.

"My orders," the officer said shortly, "are to shoot all deserters out of hand. We cannot afford to take chances. Too many spies and traitors around, and our position is desperate."

"Listen, I've got to see the general!" Wayne shouted desperately. "On my forearm is a formula which—"

The officer did not allow him to finish. He raised each of Wayne's strong arms in turn and eyed them, dropped them and smiled grimly.

"Formula, eh? You take me for a fool?"

"Invisible micro-writing!" Wayne insisted. "You've got to listen, man! The fate of our whole force on this planet depends on it! I'm a special messenger!"

"And you want to get in to the general and take a pot-shot at him? Or better still, scratch him with poisoned fingernails? All that's been tried by deserters and traitors before. *This* time it won't work! My orders are to stop all and everybody from entering. One in company with a known deserter makes two. Guard, to attention!"

They drew up sharply, their ray guns leveled—but before they could fire, there was a sudden commotion in their ranks and the clanging of alarm bells. The officer glanced around as a slender figure came dashing into the light, a mud-stained figure in clothes ripped and torn.

"Ethel!" Wayne shouted hoarsely. "By all the fates—"

"Who are you?" The officer grasped her arm and whirled her to him.

"Ethel Waldon, daughter of the late governor of Asteroid X/47!" Her words came in a rush. "Don't you realize who this man is?"

"Yes, a deserter!" the officer retorted. "And you are, too, from the looks of things. We know Asteroid X/47 is in Venusian hands. You can't get away with this—"

"Oh, you *fool!*" the girl screamed hysterically; then before the officer could tighten his grip on her, she wrenched herself free and tore across the square to the doorway of the new G.H.Q. A hail of ray gun charges followed her. She fell, got up again holding her shoulder, staggered to the door and fell again.

FISTS clenched, faced by those guns Wayne could only wait. He saw the headquarters door open suddenly. A broad-shouldered figure outlined against the light from within stooped and lifted the girl up. He carried her inside, then came hurrying out. It was General Fletcher himself, his voice hoarse with fury.

"What blasted infernal dolt rayed that girl?" he thundered. "Don't you know she's the daughter of my late friend the governor of Asteroid X/47? Did *you* give the order, Officer Clayton?"

"I—er— You said nobody was to see you, and—"

"Damn you for an idiot! Lower those guns, you men, and get back to your posts! Clayton, report to me in thirty minutes. There's such a thing as too zealous a soldier. . . ."

Fletcher swung around. "Miss Waldon tells me she can vouch for your being Pilot Wayne of Earth Squadron," he said gratefully, gripping Wayne's

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arm. "I'm glad to see you—damn glad . . . I suppose Officer Clayton was only doing his duty, but dammit— You, there, come with us," he added shortly to Paddles.

They went into headquarters quickly and Wayne instantly hurried to the girl as she lay on a camp bed.

"Ethel! Did they—"

"Nothing, Paul . . . nothing," the girl smiled. "Flicked a piece out of my shoulder. Soon be fixed— Go on, get your business finished!"

Wayne stood up, turned to Fletcher.

"I have to report, sir—"

"I know all about that secret radio instructions. Where's that formula?" Fletcher asked.

Wayne thrust out his arm. "Here. And credentials. I am instructed to tell you to use Ray 72/5. It will reveal the message."

The general snapped a switch and a blue light trained on Wayne's forearm. Momentarily the writing in his skin came to view, then faded as the switch cut off again.

"I am satisfied, Squadron Leader Wayne," Fletcher said quietly. "I'll have my experts here immediately." He pressed several buttons. "You are a man of courage, Wayne," he stated gravely. "This plague can now be mastered . . . But you—" He eyed Paddles menacingly.

"Also a man of courage," Paul Wayne said firmly. "I vouch for that, sir. Not a deserter, but a staunch ally of the cause. Without him I would have failed."

"I see . . ." Fletcher coughed. "All right—all right, I'll take your word for it. You will be returned to service," he finished, eying Paddles' relieved face. "No questions asked."

"Th-thanks, General!"

Wayne turned aside to the girl, spoke to her.

"Ethel, how did you ever get out of—"

"The river?" She shrugged. "A forked tree branch caught me around the waist and I managed to scramble out. I saw Earth soldiers returning to their base, so I followed them. It brought me here—just in time, too . . ."

"I don't intend to ever lose you again," Wayne said fervently. "I've got something to—"

He straightened up as the experts came in. But while they went to work to photograph his arm, his eyes and the girl's were fixed fondly on each other.

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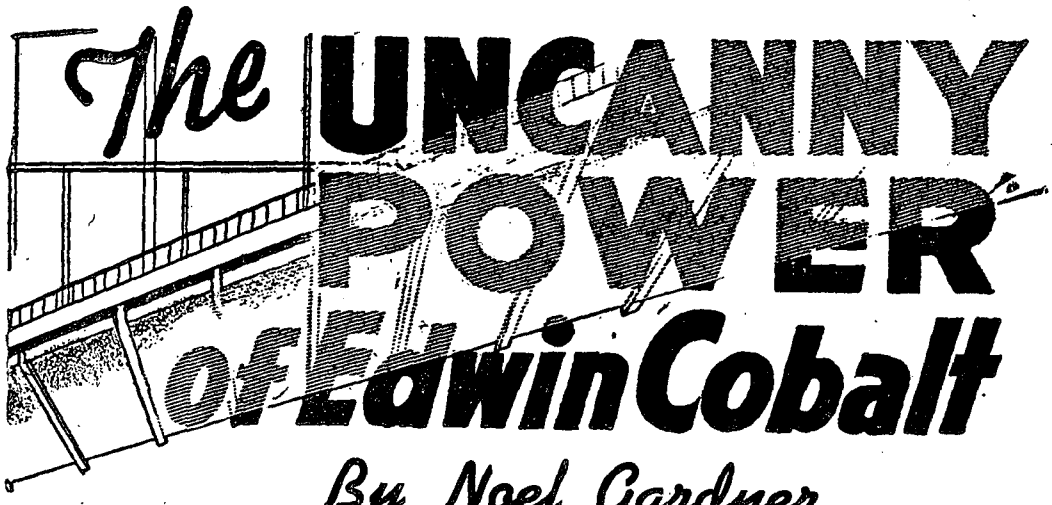

The UNCANNY POWER of Edwin Cobalt

By Noel Gardner

Panic struck into Edwin Cobalt's soul as the doubting power grew beyond his ability to control it

I'M naturally hard to convince. I doubt everything. In short, I'm the original "man from Missouri."

And one of the things that I've always felt came home to me as I lay back in my easy chair and stared at the surrealistic oil Susan had bought that day during some temporary aberration. If you can call *that* art—

It was a mess of coiling green and purple serpentine shapes. I was tired after a hard day's work, and my eyes were a bit out of focus. The picture wavered on the wall like a nightmare.

Suddenly, with no more warning than that, I started to wonder if the picture was real. That travesty should never have been painted. I felt myself doubting its existence.

Then all at once it wasn't there, and there wasn't even a lighter patch on the wall to mark where it had been.

I got up from the couch and went over to look. I had fallen asleep and Susan had removed the thing, probably. Odd.

Susan came in from the kitchen, flushed and charming in a mild way. She is blonde and slim and fluttery.

"Soup's on," she said.

"Where's the picture?" I asked. "Did you take it?"

She just looked at me.

"What picture?"

"The surrealistic one." I pointed to the wall. Susan laughed dutifully and came over to me, expecting to be kissed.

"What on earth are you talking about, Ed? You know we haven't any surrealistic pictures."

"If you've thrown it out," I told her, kissing her at last, "that's swell. Okay by me."

"You're crazy," the lady said and went back into the kitchen.

I looked at the wall, but there was no mark of a nail to indicate where the picture had hung. Nor could I find it

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around the apartment.

Susan had cooked a steak. I could smell it, but when I went to lift the cover on the broiler my wife slapped my hands and chased me away. I retreated to the bathroom, tidied myself up, and began to think about illusions.

Like the picture. Sometimes you imagine things are there when they're not. Magicians' tricks. Like I might imagine there was a steak in the broiler when there really wasn't. The appetizing aroma—auto-suggestion. Sometimes I think too damn much.

Imperceptibly I did it. I got around to wondering if there *was* a steak in the kitchen, and then I reached the point of doubting it.

Susan called, "Come on, Ed. Ready yet?"

I found her in the bedroom, tugging on an absurd hat.

"Aren't you *ready?*" she asked.

"I'm ready," I said. "Why the hat?"

"Well! After all, if we're going out to dinner . . . unless you want to eat in a hamburger joint—"

"Going out to dinner!" I must have sounded surprised. "I'm ready to tear into that steak."

"What steak?"

I took her by the hand and led her out to the kitchen and pointed to the broiler.

"That steak," I said, lifting up the lid.

There wasn't anything under it. Not even a speck of grease. The broiler grid was spotless.

But french fries and spinach were cooked and ready. I showed them to Susan and she looked flabbergasted.

"Lordy," she said, "I'm veering. Why on earth did I cook those when I knew we were eating out?"

"Look," I almost yelled, "do you remember buying and cooking a steak?"

"Not since last week," she said, with the utmost certainty.

We ate out. Doutbting Thomas, indeed! I felt more certain about the picture now. But I felt very uncertain about other things. In the mirror opposite our table booth I scrutinized myself. Short, chunky, light-haired, ordinary looking. I wasn't a magician. Anyway—

Anyway, I looked at the salt-shaker and whispered, "I doubt if you exist."

"I don't get it," said Susan, reaching for the shaker. "What's the point?"

"There isn't any," I said. Either I had imagined things, or the power was uncontrollable. I couldn't turn it on and off like a faucet. I ordered a drink and then another.

WE WENT to a night club. When we emerged, I was woozy. I wanted to call a cab but Susan insisted on the sub. She likes to ride in the subways when she's tight. I said, "Okay; the 69th Street station's only a few blocks away."

As the crow flies. We didn't fly. We staggered. We got into Central Park somehow, indulged in an acrimonious argument with an elm, and finally emerged on 69th Street. We walked toward Broadway, but couldn't find it.

So that was why I finally said, with some bitterness, "I doubt if there *is* a 69th Street station."

Well, when we got to 69th and Broadway there wasn't any subway station. The cop we asked said we were tight and there never had been a station there. If you know New York, you'll agree with him. I'm the only man in the world who remembers the 69th Street subway station.

The cop called a cab and we went home.

I WOKE up the next morning with a ghastly hangover and did hasty things

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with worcestershire sauce and an egg-yolk. Susan was still pounding her ear when I left. Trip-hammers were roaring in my skull and I couldn't focus my thoughts. But I tried. Magic? Miracles? Will-power? Something in me was changed; but how or why I couldn't say. It seemed that if I doubted the existence of anything, that thing ceased to exist. And the power was retroactive. The thing never *had* existed.

Maybe the world didn't exist, and I was just dreaming it . . .

I got to the Manhattan Vista building and went up to the law offices of Handrel and Son. Simon Handrel, a bulky old scoundrel with tonsured white hair, greeted me with pink, well-massaged cordiality.

"Morning, Ed. Those Hanscomb bonds are on your desk. Will you attend to them immediately?"

"All right," I said, and went into my office. My desk was smothered with stuff. I remembered it was my birthday, and that the office staff politely deluged me with presents on that auspicious occasion. Papers and files were on the desk, too. I scrambled through them, searching vainly for the Hanscomb bonds. No soap. It seemed opportune, under the circumstances, to curse the day I was born.

I found an aspirin and washed it down. But I couldn't find those confounded bonds.

My mind was utterly chaotic. The bonds, I thought; and then: *what bonds?* Hanscomb's bonds. Who's Hanscomb? That old so-and-so in Brooklyn. What about him? The bonds. What bonds? It was all a plot to drive me nuts.

Personally, I doubted whether the bonds had ever existed.

I cleared my desk, found nothing, returned to Handrel's office, and explained the situation. He blinked at me.

"Hanscomb's bonds? But Hanscomb hasn't got any bonds, Ed. I thought you knew that. You must have him mixed up with someone else."

I must have looked strange, for Handrel clucked worriedly. "Hangover? Why not take the day off?"

"I need liquor," I said. "Lots of it." So Handrel, who's a soak anyway, pushed back the papers on his desk, and offered to take a quick one with me. He never misses a chance. We rode down in the elevator and popped into the bar.

WE hoisted several quick ones.

I looked at Handrel. He was sympathetic, and not so dumb. Maybe he could help me. If I hadn't been rather high, I'd never have thought so.

"Look," I said, "did you ever wonder whether we're real?"

"Oh, sure."

"I mean it. I read a story once where a guy actually dreamed the world and everybody on it. Just a dream, everything was. And when he woke up—poof."

Handrel seemed to find that very funny. He repeated it several times, giggling. "Poof. Heh."

I glared at him, seeing a fat, complacent stupid person, satisfied with his sleek law office in the Manhattan Vista, that towering skyscraper . . . unreal and far away. Did it exist? I felt drunkenly dubious . . .

Then we were walking down the street beside an empty lot. A great many people were emerging from the lot and mingling quietly with the throng on the sidewalk. I recognized some of them. My co-workers in the Manhattan Vista building.

Only that remarkable skyscraper didn't exist. It never had existed. Do *you* remember it?

Well, I do.

"It's great being a man of leisure,"

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said Handrel, puffing on his cigar. "What line did you say you were in, Ed?"

"Law," I told him. "I work for you."

"Heh. That's a good one. But you can't entice me back into the game. When I retired, it was for good and all."

I started to wonder about all the people who had worked in the Manhattan Vista building. Had they suddenly retired, too? Or . . . I don't know. The unemployment statistics for this year are much higher. Maybe I threw a lot of people out of work. Only, of course, they never knew it. Their life-pattern had changed completely, and their memories too.

Retroactive obliteration . . .

I would have to be careful. But I started to wonder about Susan, somehow. I decided to go home, and invited Handrel to go with me. It would cheer me to look at Susan's pretty, familiar face.

When we walked into the apartment, a dark man with chestnut hair was making love to my wife. The whole thing seemed pretty familiar to both of them. I recognized Ben, Handrel's son, and Handrel said something in a shocked, choking voice.

Susan tore away and shrank back in a corner, looking terrified and trapped. Ben moistened his lips and stood up, facing me, his arms hanging loose at his sides. I don't know what he expected —homicide, perhaps.

"Listen, Ed," he got out. "You don't—"

He stopped, because I was just standing there, swaying a little, watching the two of them. Beside me Handrel was making gasping noises; it had hit him pretty hard. He worshipped Ben. But I was seeing something else.

Susan. Walks in the Park. Moonlight on the Hudson. Blind romance, and the night I proposed to her. The silly, dear little things that had made the apartment a home. The way she nibbled at her toast in the morning. The way she wrinkled her nose when she smiled. And now those things were suddenly seen with a different perspective. Susan. Ben. Standing there, guilty, shamefaced, afraid . . .

I couldn't have been so idiotic. I couldn't have loved her or trusted him. They weren't real. They . . .

They weren't there. Susan and Ben were gone!

"SUSAN!" I shouted.

Beside me Handrel said, "Susan? What's the idea, Ed? I didn't know you had company."

He stared at me when I laughed. "I had company—uh-huh! Handrel, you —oh, Lord!" I sank down on the couch and chewed my lips.

He lifted gray eyebrows at me. "Women are dangerous, Ed—to your reputation, at least. You ought to think of getting married."

I said, "Do you have a son named Ben?"

There was a long silence. Then Handrel asked, very quietly, "Don't you feel all right? I mean—it's not just the liquor. I can see that. You're acting very strangely."

"I'm imagining things," I said. "I imagined I had a wife named Susan and you had a son named Ben. Only that isn't true, is it? I thought not."

I got up, went to the sideboard, and poured drinks. Susan kept her favorite handbag in the sideboard, for some reason, I remembered. Only, of course, it wasn't there.

I poured the raw whiskey down my throat. Handrel passed out after a while. I took him home in a taxi, with two quarts in my pockets. I got blind, stinking, horribly drunk. And that night . . .

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I started to feel doubtful.

Nothing was stable; alcohol misted the outlines of everything. Remember the great Metropolitan Bridge across the Hudson, at 72nd Street, built in 1934? Of course you don't remember it. But it existed, till I started to feel doubtful about it.

Remember the *Titania,* which docked in New York a few days before the *Queen Mary*—biggest British steamboat in the world? A huge liner, a monster, a Behemoth. But the *Titania* never was—except in my own memory.

Remember—hell, what's the use? You don't remember; you can't. But the only thing that saved the Earth was good Scotch whiskey.

For I commenced to feel doubtful about the Earth, and passed out in Central Park just before I got too doubtful.

THAT'S all. I woke up, went home, and wrote this.. I have the most frightful hangover anyone can imagine. And my ghastly power is still latent within me. What it is I cannot say.

I sit here at my desk, exhausted, my nerves jolting, my system temporarily poisoned by alcohol. I don't know what is going to happen. For nothing seems real to me. That clock on the desk before me— *What* clock?

Yes. It keeps on happening. Why should I doubt the reality of solid, three-dimensional things which are obviously existing? I could reasonably have doubted intangibles, like Susan's love for me, and Ben's friendship. Susan—no one will believe she ever existed. And Ben. His father doesn't remember him. The Manhattan Vista building. The *Titania.* The Metropolitan Bridge. But is this phenomenon subjective or objective? Perhaps I am the one at fault, and the *Titania* and the bridge existed only in my mind. A physician would call me insane, and he might be right.

I don't know. It's all utterly crazy. This can't be happening to me. I can't really make buildings vanish by doubting their existence. But I—

In the Lord's name, who or what am I? Edwin Cobalt. Who is Edwin Cobalt? Does anyone else see his fingers move rapidly over the typewriter keys? See his gray, striped shirt covering his arms and chest? I look down at blue trousers, an unbuttoned vest, and a gray necktie. How much do the senses prove? Seeing, hearing, touching? . . .

I am beginning to doubt whether Edwin Cobalt exi—

Author's Note—This story is pure fiction. Edwin Cobalt is a product of my imagination—for, as will be self-evident, the actual existence of the manuscript disproves the theorem on which it is based. The "obliteration power" is retroactive. When Susan vanished, so did her clothes, her belongings, and everything closely connected with her. Naturally, if there never was a Susan Cobalt, there would be no place in the world for her handbag or her garments.

Similarly, if Edwin Cobalt vanished, there would be no place in the world for a script written by him—a man who never existed.

It is merely a coincidence that I have just moved to an apartment near Central Park, which, the superintendent assures me, has been vacant for some time. It is quite impossible to suppose that Cobalt actually lived here, and that the superintendent simply forgot him. It is also ridiculous to suppose that my memory of writing this story is a convenient illusion.

I, Noel Gardner—and not the nonexistent Edwin Cobalt—must have written this script.

I hope.

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The SCIENTIFIC MILER

Professor Kitery had magic in that hypodermic, and Stephen Martin went into the race almost a super-man

THROUGH an open window in Bowler University's science building the campus grass had taken on the heady sheen of spring. Professor Donald Kitery, short, thin, with an inquisitive face and bright eyes, dripped verbal acid over his class.

"Gentlemen," he said dryly, "observe the house fly, the common *Musca domestica.*"

Twenty-two pairs of eyes turned and followed his gesture to the window, where a fly buzzed in silly panic only a few inches from liberty.

"Intelligence," sighed the professor, "is a wonderful thing."

He glanced at the papers in his hand.

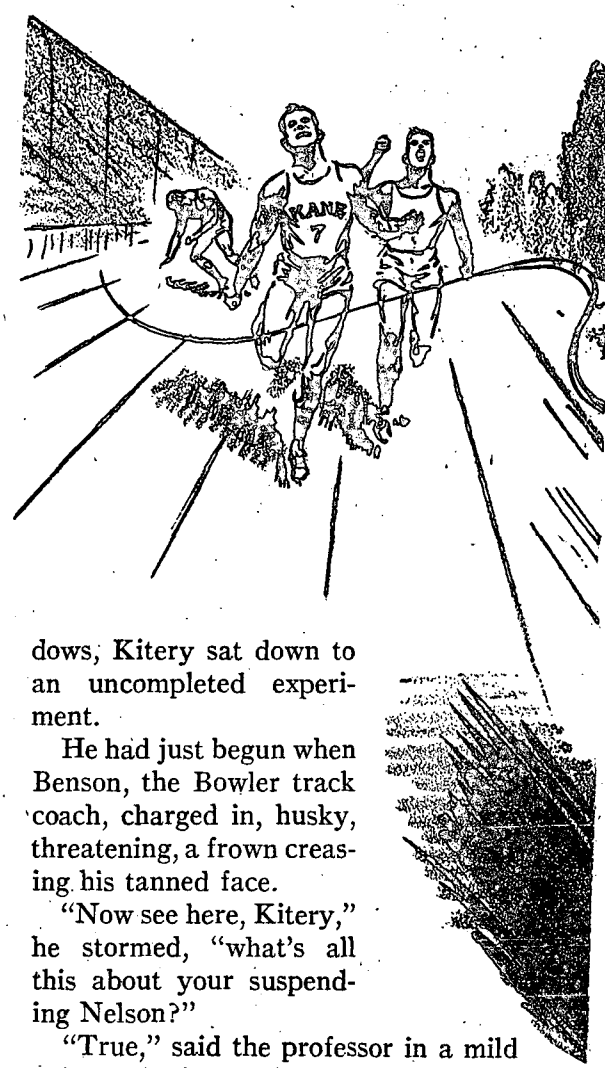
"I have here the results of your spring examinations. Fly brains, gentlemen, fly brains! Only three of you have passed. Of these, only one has achieved a grade of excellence—Stephen Martin, 98!"

The class twisted its collective neck at the far corner. There Stephen Martin, 98, lanky, slat-thin and unhappy, snuffled with embarrassment and perspired behind thick shell glasses.

"Greasy grind!" someone muttered.

"Class dismissed," said the professor hurriedly.

There was a mad surge, then the door slammed back into silence. Professor Kitery gathered his papers and trotted into the laboratory. It was a large room, a room crammed with smooth-surfaced tables, glass retorts, test tubes and burners. At a desk near the windows, Kitery sat down to an uncompleted experiment.



He had just begun when Benson, the Bowler track coach, charged in, husky, threatening, a frown creasing his tanned face.

"Now see here, Kitery," he stormed, "what's all this about your suspending Nelson?"

"True," said the professor in a mild voice. He leaned back and crossed a skinny ankle across his knee.

"But he's my star miler!" wailed the coach.

Kitery nodded. "Big in biceps and small in brain. I'm sorry, Benson, but

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OF BOWLER U.

By IVAN SANDROF

Benson, the coach, was speechless as Martin breasted the tape, a winner by a wide margin

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this is a university with a scholastic tradition. I should hate to see the day when we excel only in our athletes."

Benson turned his head in exasperation.

"You don't understand, Professor. The big meet with Holwyn is less than a month away. With Nelson out, we haven't a chance! Give us a break, will you?"

Kitery observed him as he would a microbe.

"Why is it, Benson?" he mused. "Your best athletes are invariably our worst students. Now, if you could only harness, say, Nelson's running ability to a good student's brain — what wouldn't you have?"

BENSON looked at him as if he were put out, then lost what remained of his temper.

"By Jupiter's tendons!" he snorted. "Maybe you can do it—I can't! Now, are you or are you not going to reinstate Nelson?"

"No!" said Kitery softly, but definitely.

It was stuffy in the lab. After Benson had left, Kitery bent over to open a window. Beyond the campus green a number of track men in shorts were taking the grade of the oval cinder path; a group of sprinters knelt in the starting pits; a pole vaulter surged over ten feet in a graceful twist. The scene brought back Kitery's own memories. The lush smell of grass, spring and youth stirring. . . .

Directly below the window the sound of bickering young voices reached him. Pencil suspended over paper, he closed his eyes and listened.

"But, Margie," came the distressed voice of one of his students. That would be young Martin, thought the professor.

"Gee whiz, I've tried, I tell you! I'm just no good! Coach laughed me off the track. He—" and here the voice gulped, "he said go sprint to the library and stay there!"

"You're nothing but a bookworm!" scolded the girl. "You could make the team if you wanted to. Your legs are long enough!"

"I can't help that, Margie!" he said ruefully. "Gosh, if you only knew how much I want to! Don't go away, Margie! Margie!"

There followed a loud and unmistakable groan. Sticking his head out, Kitery saw Stephen Martin slumped on a bench, chin resting on a sweaty palm, which in turn rested on one of his tall knees. With dog-like devotion, his eyes followed the retreating girl.

"Martin!"

The gangling youth sprang to his feet, jaw dropping.

"Sir?"

"Come into the laboratory. I want a talk with you."

Moments later Kitery glanced at him sharply.

"The window was open. I overheard part of your—er—conversation. What seems to be the trouble?"

Martin flushed and gagged. "Nothing, sir. That is—I—she—we—"

"Take an objective view, my boy," urged the professor, smiling. "You're scientist enough for that."

Martin hesitated, then boldly struck out.

"Well, sir, it's like this. She's still young and doesn't realize that studies are more important than athletics and I've tried to tell her, sir, but she won't listen—"

"Women get that way sometimes," said Kitery, nodding. He doodled a while on a scrap of paper, then asked quickly, "And now—what would you really give to make the track team?"

Martin met the glance that sheared through his lie as if it were tissue pa-

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per, and blushed again.

"I'd give a year of my life, sir!" he said huskily.

"Rather an excessive return, that," said Kitery. "But possibly true." Then he added more slowly, "Perhaps we can do it, Martin. Not only that, but establish a front place for you in the Holwyn meet."

MARTIN spluttered. "But how—I—you—Coach rejected me! I tried out and couldn't make it. My reflexes—I can't seem to hold anything without dropping it! Even my legs get all tangled up!"

"That means nothing," dismissed Kitery sharply. "You've studied long enough, Martin. What is the action of adrenalin on the human body?"

"It provides a strong stimulant to heart action."

"Exactly! A spur on the horse's flank. The body supplies it naturally under duress—some sudden shock, fear or anger." Here Kitery bent forward with an air of secrecy. "Now suppose adrenalin, or some related but even more powerful agent, could be artificially administered to the system and the fatigue toxins entirely eliminated—"

Martin's blue eyes were bulging.

"You mean—there's some method that—"

Kitery leaned back in his chair and smiled.

"I've been working on my formula for ten years. There isn't a research laboratory in the world that wouldn't give a fortune for Vitalin. Perhaps it isn't exactly orthodox to use it— But if your body can take it—well, we'll see."

"TAKE your shirt off!" crisply ordered the school medico, shoving a stethoscope into his ears.

Kitery watched intently as Martin's reflexes were tapped, as the metabolism graph recorded on the round drum, as the tongue stick clattered into the basket.

"What's the verdict, Doc?" Martin begged.

"Sound as a bell," chirped the medico. "Fit for strenuous work. What are you going to use him for, Professor?" he joked. "Book delivery?"

"Something like that," said Kitery. "Come on, Martin."

On the way back they passed a group of students beside the old fence. Several wore large orange B's on sweaters. Martin recognized Jig Jones, Nelson and Cobs, the broad-jumper.

"Hello, boys," Kitery nodded cheerfully.

There was a thunder of utter silence.

"Hmm," observed the professor dryly. "My popularity seems to have waned since Nelson's suspension."

"The whole school was counting on a victory," Martin said apologetically. "With Nelson out of the running, our chances are about as good as a snowball in July—unless—" He glanced up hopefully.

"Stranger things have happened," observed Kitery. "About three weeks to the meet. You'll have to put in some heavy practice, my boy. Vitalin will keep the speed going once you get it up, but you'll have to be able to stand the strain." He pulled out a heavy gold timepiece from his vest. "Tomorrow morning at six, behind the old athletic field."

"I'll be there with bells on!" said Martin.

THE dew was heavy on the long grass when the sun poked through to disperse the gray mist. Plodding over the abandoned cinder path was a tall lanky

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figure in shorts and sweatshirt.

"How'm I doin'?" he panted, as he swung by the crouching figure enveloped in a trench coat.

"*Non passibus aequis,*" muttered Kitery, rising to his full five feet five. "You're out of step, Martin. Remember to keep your knee action up." He wiped the dew off his face with a large handkerchief. "That will do for now. Tomorrow, same time, same place."

"I'll be here!" promised Martin eagerly. "When do I get the Vitalin?"

"As soon as we iron the kinks out of your muscles. We could try it now, but while your heart would keep pumping sufficiently, the strain on your unaccustomed tendons might nullify the effect."

Martin nodded gratefully. "I appreciate it, sir—your taking a chance like this."

Kitery glanced at him sharply.

"I'm a scientist, Martin. If I'm found out—well—" He shrugged his shoulders. "Progress and pain seem to go together. You understand—I trust you fully. No one is to know of this."

"I swear it, sir!" There was no doubting the fervor in his voice.

Meanwhile, gloom enshrouded the Bowler campus. Said the Bowler *Tattler:*

With the traditional track meet against Holwyn less than two weeks off and Nelson still under suspension, Bowler's chances look darker than ever. Coach Benson is working overtime, but a miracle doesn't seem likely. We need Nelson!

And again:

Maybe we're seeing things, but our informant swears he glimpsed a familiar pair of lanky legs jogging around the old track long before the cows were up. "Pup" Martin, no less! And what's he doing out of a book? We still need Nelson!

Martin and the professor were still at it four days before the event. Only to avoid prying eyes and the *Tattler,* they had taken to a deserted country road. Kitery, stoutly pumping on a bicycle, trailed the mile past blooming spring foliage and stone fences. About five yards behind, running with a swaying stride, but breathing easily, was Pup Martin.

"Stop!" said the professor, braking to a halt. He leaned the bicycle against a maple tree and observed his protege critically.

"Now?" asked Martin eagerly.

"Now!" said the professor firmly.

He removed a hypodermic needle from a pocket kit, a box of cotton and two tiny glass vials. One of them, held up against the sun, sparkled with a deep, translucent amber.

"Vitalin!" said Kitery.

Swabbing Martin's left biceps with alcohol, he sucked the fluid into the syringe and injected with a skilful pressure.

"Easy now," he cautioned, as Martin's face drained white. "This won't take complete effect for ten minutes." He drew out the needle. "When it does—you'll feel it," he chuckled. "Any reaction yet?"

"I—I feel a little dizzy," confessed Martin.

KITERY took his pulse. "Coming along. Heart beginning to accelerate. I'm going to shoot up about a half mile. When I signal with my handkerchief from the crest, you will proceed, as it were, with dispatch."

Martin nodded. "Gosh!" he gulped.

A moment later Professor Kitery was pedaling furiously down the road, jouncing over rocks and hollows. In back of him a beardless Sampson lifted a large boulder from the stone fence and sent it crashing into the woods.

"Yahoo!" he whooped, brushing the dirt off his hands. "Yahoo!"

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A bluejay that had narrowly missed being hit flew into a high branch and warbled a warning to the world.

Then Kitery, ant-sized on the distant hill, brandished a flick of white. Martin got going. He came driving up and skidded to a stop ten feet beyond the mark. Kitery snapped his stop-watch.

"How do you feel now?" he asked.

"Fine!" grinned Martin. "Gosh, I could jump over the moon!"

"No doubt," said the professor dryly. "But I wouldn't advise trying. You'll do," he added, taking Martin's pulse again. "But the effect won't wear off for an hour. No undue exertion meanwhile. And plenty of rest tonight."

"It won't wear off for an hour?" said Martin, a glint in his eye.

"One hour!" sternly repeated Kitery.

"Good-by, sir!" There was a whoosh, a flurry of sand and the experiment was charging down the hill back to the university.

Shaking his head, Kitery regarded the disappearing figure. Then he glanced again at the stop-watch, nodded and began whistling a tuneless tune.

The hour had five minutes to go when Pup Martin, fully dressed and laden with books, crossed the campus. Against the old fence, Jig Jones, Nelson and several cronies were idling with pipes. With accustomed humility, Martin gave them a wide berth. But a piercing whistle showed that he had been spotted.

"Why, if it isn't Pup Martin! Bowler's new track star!" shrieked Jig.

"He can do Virgil in four seconds flat!" jeered another.

Martin glanced anxiously at the chapel clock. Four minutes to. Carefully putting down his books, he sauntered over.

"Did you say something?" he asked meekly.

"Aw, go stick your face—" But the retort was interrupted. Jig Jones found himself a pinwheel whirling over Martin's head. Not liking the sensation, he squawked loudly, then found himself a rocket diving toward the grass. It was all very sudden.

"Any more?" said Pup Martin hastily.

There was no answer. Instead five open mouths regarded the sprawling figure of Jones.

"Did you see what I saw?" one of them said dazedly.

"It was a dream!" came the answer. "The worm turned!"

The nine o'clock bell boomed out. Hurrying forward, Martin's shoulders drooped to their accustomed slouch.

"Boo!" a classmate shouted in his ear.

Martin's arms twitched; the books and papers went flying over the macadam walk.

"Don't *do* that!" he snapped nervously.

Awkwardly, he picked up his possessions. When he glanced up, it was to imitate a lobster before Margie Williams, dazzling and shapely in a pink sweater and skirt. She sniffed with contempt.

"Poor itzy bitzy," she cooed, "did somebody fwighten him?"

"Hello, Margie!" he began, flame-faced and incoherent. "I—I—"

But Margie had fled into class. Shaking his head and heaving a hang-dog sigh, he slowly followed.

AN ideal day for the meet. All morning huge, snub-nosed buses crammed with students and bearing purple and gold banners marked HOLWYN, had been honking along Stadium Road. There was still a full hour to the meet but the best seats were already

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filled. On the field, attendants softened the jumping pits and smoothed down the quarter-mile track.

In their locker room, Bowler's best were getting into shorts. No one said much, but the gloom was thick enough to lean on. Cobs, the broad-jumper, nervously tugged on his white wool socks. Suddenly he crashed a shoe against the green metal lockers.

"Nelson's what we need!" he shouted. "We might as well hand the meet over on a platter! We—"

"Aw, stick your face in a shower!" Riordan blazed back. "What's the use of beefing?"

In an adjacent office, Coach Benson was leaving when a knock interrupted. Professor Kitery entered, hat in hand. He stood there patiently, small, bright-faced and very polite.

"Oh, it's you!" said Benson contemptuously. "In for the kill, Professor?" He moved toward the exit. "Most of us here have some regard for Bowler's standing. I can't say that much for you."

Kitery's eyes were grave. "I did what I felt was the right thing. But that is not why I came. About the meet—we haven't much chance to win, I take it?"

"Not a chance in ten!" Benson snorted. "It would be plenty close even with Nelson in. Without—" His hand made an arc with the thumb down.

Through the open windows drifted the college cheer. Both listened, then looked at each other.

"Coach," Kitery began suddenly, "I've come to ask a favor. Let me finish, please!" he said, holding up a hand to still the other's retort. "Three weeks ago you came into my laboratory to ask for Nelson's reinstatement. If you remember, I asked why your best athletes were such poor students. I suggested the possibility of hitching Nelson's biceps to a student's brain—"

"And I said maybe you could do it—I couldn't!" snapped Benson. "You'll have to hurry up. I'm due outside."

"I've done it," said the professor quietly. He flung the door open. "Come in, Martin." Then turning to Benson, he said, "This is your new miler!"

The laugh that started deep in Benson's throat came out so fast it choked him.

"What a gag!" he coughed.

"I wouldn't laugh, Benson!" snapped Kitery. "Ignorance is a poor excuse!"

BENSON'S eyes swung toward the door. A weaker man on the receiving end of that critical stare would have blanched, but not Pup Martin. Gone was the cringe, the bent shoulders, the asthmatic sniffle. He stood at ease in shorts and shirt, even crossed one spiked shoe over the other in a careless stance.

Probing fiercely with thumbs, Benson went over his legs.

"I dunno," he said, biting his lip. "I'm just crazy enough to believe what I see. He looks fit. By Jupiter's tendons!" he snorted, squaring off for another good look. "He even looks like a runner! Come on, we'll take a chance. I've got little choice—only, lad, if you ever ran in your life, you've got to run today!"

From the stands a short, snappy cheer rolled over the excited meet like a cannon shot.

"Br-ackety-brack-brack-brack—BOWLER!"

There was the signal gun and the 400-meter hurdlers were off. Janson, Bowler's leading steeplechaser, got off to a flying start, white legs flashing in the sun. Over the three-foot hurdles he skimmed, propelled along by the rousing roar from the spectators.

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Then a sudden groan. Benson shaded his eyes and flung down a box of aspirin tablets in disgust.

"He's down!" someone cried.

Came a rousing shout from the Holwyn supporters as Carter, in purple and gold trunks, pushed by the sprawling Janson. Spikes slapping the cinders, arms outflung, he came surging into the home stretch, a winner by two yards. Staggering into second place came Janson, tears streaming down his face.

"Wa-Wa-Wa-Wa-Bowler!" came the taunt from across the field. "HOLWYN!"

"A very good effort," decided Professor Kitery on the far corner of the bench. He turned to Martin. "How do you feel?"

"I'm all right," grinned the experiment. He wiped his glasses on the hem of his blue robe. "Felt a little dizzy after the injection. About due to go to town, though."

Kitery took his pulse and nodded.

"Going strong." He scanned the field. "That settles Cobs in the broad jump. A very poor showing, I must say. But we have the pole vault and a place in the hundred-yard dash."

"We need at least five points to win. The mile will decide the meet. It looks as if I'll have to do it." Flexing his muscles like an athlete posing, Martin guffawed. "Look at those slowpokes!"

Kitery glanced at him severely.

"That will do, young man!"

THERE'S a small silver plaque in Bowler's trophy room bearing the legend and date of the event. It all started logically enough. Nothing showed on the surface to distinguish Pup Martin from the others except, possibly, his long legs and an air of unusual vitality—the skittery qualities of a thoroughbred entering the starting post.

On position he had drawn the outside lane, certainly no advantage to begin with. But it didn't seem to matter in the slightest.

Linen knickers fluttering, the starter leaned forward.

"Take your marks!"

The runners got into their starting holes and crouched down.

"Get set!"

Six muscular backs arched up, balanced lightly on toes and fingers, poked their heads forward like greyhounds.

The starter's trigger finger pulled—the pistol barked—the stands erupted a roar of excitement—and the mile event was on.

You wouldn't believe it unless you had seen it yourself. And even then you might have been forgiven for rubbing an eye, or pinching yourself. Out of the jumble of runners—they had all started together—there emerged Professor Kitery's experiment.

Long, lanky, with clenched fists and tousled hair, that swaying frame of his had summoned up a miraculous drive. In caricature it would have been labeled, "Ichabod Crane Chases a Rabbit."

The sun reflected from Martin's glasses every time he tossed his head—which was often—five, then seven, eight yards in front of the others. And still he forged ahead, plunging like a drunkard down an 80-degree hill.

"He's crazy!" prayed Coach Benson. "A madman! He can't hold! He'll tire himself out before the halfway mark!" Leaping to his feet, the coach babbled to himself. "Slow down, you fool, slow down!"

"Yeeaaaayy, Martin!" roared the stands good-naturedly. No one believed it would last.

At the halfway mark he was still leading by eight yards; at three-quarters, by ten. And when the gun lashed out to

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indicate the final lap, he charged through the tape like a bull moose robbed of its mate—a winner by fourteen unmistakable yards!

"No," whispered Benson through dry lips. "Impossible!" He glanced again at his stop-watch and groaned. "Somebody give me a drink. It's sick I am and delirious!"

On the track the experiment was still going strong. A bit wobbly, to be sure, and swaying even more, but definitely in the running. Out leaped an agitated figure in a trench coat and held up a professorial hand.

"Stop! Stop at once, Martin! The race is over! You have won! In fact, my boy, if I may say so, you have done very well!"

And from the stands, a girl called Margie came running out to place an apology where it would do the most good.

TRUDGING back to the campus after the meet, a car creaked to a stop beside the professor. Coach Benson jumped out, grinning foolishly and very red about the neck.

"I've been looking all over for you, Professor." He thrust out a paw. "My apologies!"

Kitery took it gingerly. "It's quite all right, Benson."

"Man alive, how did he do it?" babbled the coach. "It just wasn't human! Kitery—if you give me your secret, I'll guarantee the fastest team in the world!"

Professor Kitery's lips twitched.

"Why, certainly, Benson. Although it really isn't a secret. I gave him two intravenous injections of amber-tinted water. Will-power and self-suggestion* did the rest. I wonder if he could have jumped over the moon at that!" he mused.

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* Professor Kitery, an astute and observing individual, knew what he was up to. Under the stress of great emotion, particularly of the type which makes for a powerful incentive, people can rise to heights of achievement previously impossible.

Accordingly Pup Martin's accomplishment was not only amazing but understandable. Perhaps the best modern example we have of great will-power overcoming the greatest odds is the first fisticuff battle between Max Schmeling and Joe Louis.

In that bout, Schmeling entered the ring a heavy favorite for a terrific beating. Louis, for his part, had soldiered on the job, confident of his own prowess, and had failed to train properly. Be that as it may, Schmeling was so grimly determined to win that night that it would have taken a champion indeed to stop him.

By sheer will-power, Schmeling overcame the great fear obsession which had so paralyzed other men who had met Louis. Only by will-power could he have won, beause he was never Joe Louis' physical equal.

The same reasoning may be applied to Pup Martin. A mouse-like lad with no confidence in himself, other students kicked him around like a soccer ball until wise Professor Kitery decided to try an old but invariably successful psychological experiment on him. Being otherwise normal, Martin reacted with vim and vigor.

The psychological reason for so many human failures is that the average failure is not properly introspective, or he may be introspective to a point (such as Pup Martin) where he becomes immersed in self-pity and cannot see himself out of the dilemma of his own making. In cases such as these, friendly guidance by an understanding mind or even an examination by a practicing psychologist is the only way out.—Ed.

HE TRIED TO HARNESS THE SUN

IN 1453 the French monk, Clarence of Liege, wrote that the rays of the sun could be captured in vats lined with mirrors and that the heat thus stored could be utilized to warm homes and possibly even to cook food. Angered by the laughter that greeted his thesis, Clarence fled his monastery and, mysteriously financed, actually began construction on such a vat somewhere north of Paris. One of the men he had engaged for the work reported the matter to the Inquisition and on March 11th, 1454, the monk was burned at the stake in Paris for practicing witchcraft.—S. M. Ritter.

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CARBON is number 6 in the International Table of Atomic Weights. Its symbol is C and its atomic weight is 12,000. Carbon has three major allotropic modifications, diamond, graphite, and "amorphous" carbon. It has over 150,000 compounds. The specific gravity of diamonds is an average 3.5. Graphite has a density of 2.2. The diamond is the hardest known substance. It is used for cutting tools, jewelry, etc. Graphite is used for foundry crucibles, lead pencils, painting iron, fillers for dry cells, stove polish, glazing powder, electrodes, lubricants, paints, etc. Amorphous carbon occurs as charcoal, coke, lampblack, carbon-black, coal; is used for energy and chemical change. Carbon is essential to life, being a constituent of all animal oils, fats, sugars, starch, etc.

Next Issue:—The Romance of Cerium

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The ELIXIR OF

By HENRY KUTTNER

Trouble is no word for what happened to Richard Raleigh when he set out to demonstrate Dr. Meek's strange elixir

RICHARD RALEIGH sensed trouble the moment he entered the laboratory. His employer, Dr. Gaspar Meek, looked far too pleased with himself. Either somebody was dead or else Meek had been pulling the wings off flies again. That was the way he was. A nice guy who would have got along swell with Torquemada or maybe Nero.

Besides, Raleigh was worrying about his frogs. They had vanished without trace. His bronzed, good-looking face wore an expression of bitterness as he sat down in a protesting chair and tried to marshal the innumerable things he wanted to say to Meek. After a while, he asked,

"Well?"

"Ah," said the scientist, whirling like a Buddha on his desk chair. His bland, fat face shone in the sunlight. His bald spot glowed with an unholy light.

"Ah," he repeated, with more emphasis. "There you are, Rick. I—uh—I have finally decided that the job you hold is unworthy of your talents."

"What do you mean, job?" Raleigh asked. "I'm assistant, cook, errand boy, bottle washer and general stooge. Five jobs at least."

Meek ignored the note of irony.

"I have at last decided to allow you to aid me in my experiments. You are promoted. We are colleagues. Your salary is still the same," he hastened to add, "but what is money compared to the glory of serving science?"

Raleigh choked back the impulse to remark that money would mean he could marry Binnie, Meek's lovely but slightly bird-brained daughter. How a heel like the Doc could have fathered such an angel as Binnie was an insoluble problem. It created its own problems too. For Binnie was an old-fashioned girl and wouldn't marry without her father's permission.

"Get Daddy to say 'yes'," she had murmured into her lover's ear, "and everything will be swell . . ."

"Did you speak?" Meek inquired, breaking into his thoughts.

"'Frogs' was all I said," Raleigh grunted. "Two months I've been raising giant frogs to make some extra money, and now I find the frog pond empty." His gaze searched the room.

For some reason Meek chuckled.

"Never mind that. Look here."

He indicated several small glass vials that stood on his desk, some with red and some with green labels.

"Let's get to business. I expect some visitors shortly, and I want you to stay here till they go. Don't say anything. Just listen."

Raleigh stared at the vials.

"Oh. Your invisibility elixir. Who are the visitors?"

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INVISIBILITY

"Reporters."

"Uh?" The young man goggled. "After what happened? After the gags the papers have been running—"

A singularly nasty gleam came into Meek's blue eyes.

"Yes. They called me a faker, I believe—a publicity-hunter. Well, I think they've changed their minds.

"Ah—there's the bell."

RALEIGH sighed, got up, went into the outer office, opened the door, and was brushed on a wave of excited reporters. A dozen of them at least, yelping for Doctor Meek and with blood in their eyes. Vaguely hoping that they'd tear the scientist limb from limb, Raleigh let them enter.

Meek greeted them happily.

"Good morning, gentlemen. Have chairs."

There were only two chairs, but it was a minor point, unnoticed in the babble. A burly legman leaned over the desk and extended his hands. Either

Pedestrians gasped, women shrieked and fainted, as Raleigh plunged down the street

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he was reaching for Meek's throat, or else he was tightly gripping something invisible.

"Frogs!" the reporter said hoarsely. "Invisible frogs! And me with a hangover. My God!"

He shuddered slightly and opened his hands. There was a slight *plop!* on the desk blotter, a scrambling sound, and a splash from the goldfish bowl in the corner. One of the reporters, a round-faced individual, emitted a faint, faraway sound and drank hurriedly from a brown bottle.

"I can stand a lot," said the first speaker. "Maybe you had justification. But in the name of God, couldn't you have proved your point in some other way? Look. A parcel comes addressed to me. I open it and it's empty. Then an invisible frog comes up and hits me in the face."

"A dirty trick," said the short, squat man with jet-black hair and a drooping eyelid.

A cry came from the corner. Richard Raleigh was touched to the quick.

"My frogs—" he began in a heartfelt voice. "Be careful where you step, you men."

Meek coughed warningly. "Gentlemen," he said loudly. "I apologize, of course. I had to insure your coming here to watch my little demonstration. As I wrote you before, I have invented a fluid that causes invisibility by creating complete transparency in material objects.

"I don't know exactly how it works myself. I think some radiation is induced in the cellular or atomic structure—at least, it makes clothing invisible as well as flesh and blood.

"This"— he picked up one of the red-labeled vials— "is the invisibility elixir. The green-labeled ones are the antidote."

"Invisible frogs," said the first reporter dully. "I'm not going to write this if I vanish myself. It's the d. t.'s."

"I had expected skepticism," Meek continued, "and so I shall give you complete proof. I want you gentlemen to station yourselves at various points around this block. You"—he pointed at one—"will find your handkerchief stolen. You—will lose your hat. You—"

"Not my wallet," said that one, hastily buttoning his hip pocket. "Yesterday was payday."

"I shall visit you invisibly and give you complete proof. I'll leave my card with you all." Meek extended his leather cardcase. "Will that convince you?"

"Yeah," a sad voice said. "It'll do more than that, I'm afraid. Frogs . . ." There was a confused, hopeless mumbling.

"Good," Meek said briskly, rubbing his hands. He shooed the reporters out like chickens. There was a momentary confusion; then the room was empty save for the scientist and Raleigh.

THE latter stood in a corner, eyeing the desk. He had a brief impression that some of the vials had vanished. Perhaps—

"Now!" Meek whirled on his assistant. "Take this cardcase, quick."

"Me?" Raleigh stammered, trying to back through the wall. "Bub-bub—"

The doctor snatched up a red-labeled vial and advanced, blood in his eye.

"Drink this!"

Raleigh ducked. "I will," he said, "like hell! I have stood for a lot, but when it comes to being a guinea pig—"

Meek rubbed one of his chins thoughtfully.

"Now listen," he said in a placating tone. "You heard me tell the reporters my plan. They're stationed around the block now, waiting for an invisible man."

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"They're waiting for you," the other pointed out.

"Well, if you're invisible, they won't know the difference," Meek said with perfect logic.

"It's the last straw! You steal my frogs and then—" Raleigh choked. Only the image of Binnie restrained him from picking up Meek and battering him around the room.

"Yes," the doctor said unctuously. "Binnie. I have been thinking I'd take a trip to Mexico with her. I've also been thinking of firing you."

Raleigh writhed. But Meek held all the cards. Reluctantly he let the vial be thrust into his hand . . .

The door opened, admitting Binnie and an extroverted dog. The girl was not noteworthy, despite her prettiness, and Raleigh was deceiving himself when he saw wings sprouting from her back. The dog, however, was worthy of notice.

For one thing, Angel was an exhibitionist. He was large and nondescript, with a tinge of bloodhound in his sinister ancestry. Angel was also an arrant coward, but showed his adequate teeth at every opportunity. A dog of good taste, he heartily disliked Meek.

The sight of Binnie caused a violent reaction within Raleigh. Some might call it love. At any event, knowing that his future depended on Dr. Meek's good will, Raleigh swallowed the elixir and immediately discovered that the missing frogs had taken up residence in his stomach.

They did it gradually and by stealth. Down his gullet they went slipping and scrambling, to land with a succession of dull thuds in the stomach itself. Then they joined hands and danced a bolero. Desperately Raleigh seized his head and held it in place just as it began to float off.

"Gwlg—nwhnk!" he observed.

Binnie turned, startled. "Wh—what was that? Did I hear something, Dad?"

"Not at all," Meek denied, smiling. "Just something I—uh—was going to eat. Did you want me?"

The girl turned a rather lovely pink.

"I was looking for Rick. He—*oh!*" A peculiar reaction seemed to have overtaken Binnie. Her eyes were lambent.

The doctor looked startled.

"What's wrong?"

The girl gulped and looked down.

"Nothing. It—felt like somebody kissed me. Isn't that silly?"

"Damned silly," Meek remarked grimly, glaring at empty air. "You must excuse me, Binnie. I have work to do I—"

He paused, his gaze riveted on the unusual antics of the extroverted dog.

ANGEL was in trouble. His nose was deceiving him. There was a ghost in the room—the ghost of a smell. It smelled like Raleigh, but that gentleman obviously wasn't present. Angel shook his ears away from his eyes and stared around in a baffled and hopeless manner. No Raleigh. But the smell remained.

Angel put his nose on the carpet and proceeded to drag himself after it, sniffing audibly. Abruptly he halted, with a muffled shriek. His nose had come in violent contact with an invisible shoe.

It was a toss-up whether or not Angel would collapse. The unfortunate beast began to tremble in every limb. Raleigh, taking pity on the creature, bent down and stroked Angel's head.

That was the last straw. With a loud cry of distress the dog fainted.

Meek cleared his throat. Significantly he turned toward the door and opened it, allowing room for the invisible Raleigh to pass through. Under his breath he muttered,

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"The cardcase?"

"Got it," came an almost inaudible whisper—and Raleigh was gone, leaving a slightly hysterical beast and a girl who, though puzzled, was rather pleased than otherwise.

CHAPTER II

The Robbery

ANGEL'S recovery was swift. His bump of curiosity brought him back to consciousness. With canine instinct, he divined that the enigma had left the room, so Angel followed with frantic speed, almost upsetting Dr. Meek. There came the sound of a closing door, followed by quiet, vitriolic profanity spilling from the learned savant's lips.

He sent Binnie away and went back into his office, to practice various positions before a full-length mirror. Some of the reporters had carried cameras.

Meanwhile the invisible man was lying in the gutter outside the house, nursing a bruised knee. Trouble had been immediate. Raleigh's feet hadn't been where he imagined, and he had taken a nasty spill as a consequence. It was, in a way, like trying to walk with your eyes closed. Distances were too easily misgauged. Raleigh clambered erect, discovered that he had lost the cardcase, and searched for it. It lay nearby, and vanished as he picked it up.

What now? He looked around, feeling oddly isolated and lonely. There were few passers-by. A street car rumbled past. One of the reporters was leaning against a lamp post not far away.

Reminded of his errand, Raleigh slowly began to walk toward the man. He paused directly in front of him, waiting. The reporter made no sign. Obviously he didn't see Raleigh.

The latter delicately reached out and snatched the handkerchief that protruded from the reporter's pocket. So swiftly did it vanish that its disappearance went unnoticed. The reporter yawned, found a cigarette, and lit a match on his thumbnail.

Raleigh grinned. This was going to be easy. He extracted a card from the case and slipped it into his victim's pocket in lieu of the handkerchief.

As he turned away, there came a loud sniff from behind him. Angel was on the trail, his bloodhound instincts fully aroused. His hopeless whine seemed to say,

"What the hell *is* this, anyhow?"

Fearing complications, Raleigh hurried off. There was another reporter halfway down the block, and he accomplished his errand there before the dog caught up with him. A third reporter was leaning against the granite wall of the Fifth Security Bank on the corner, and Raleigh got his cigarette case unnoticed. He was beginning to enjoy the feeling of power his invisibility gave him. If only that damned dog would keep its distance!

But Angel was dogged, in more than one way. People paused to stare at the odd antics of the creature, who was indulging in some sort of acrobatic dance. He had again located Raleigh, and had decided to leap up and lick his friend's face. Since the man was invisible, Angel's antics looked decidedly peculiar.

A crowd gathered. "Hydrophoby," said a lean spinster wearing steel-rimmed glasses.

"Nuts," said a tall, cadaverous man with sad eyes. "The dog's drunk."

He paused, stared, and after brief consideration, added,

"No. *I'm* drunk. Or else mad. Look at that! Is that ghastly-looking dog actually floating in the air, or am I mad?"

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THE spinster did not answer, having collapsed in a faint. Cries of amazement rose from the gathering crowd. There was reason.

As Angel sprang up, Raleigh automatically had seized the dog in order to prevent him from falling and hurting himself. To the onlookers it seemed as though Angel was hanging unsupported some four feet above the sidewalk, frantically scrambling and grunting as though trying to maintain the precarious position.

A policeman pushed his way through the group. His red face turned redder.

"Break it up!" he commanded. "What's going on here, anyway?"

Nobody answered. It wasn't necessary. Patrolman Donovan compressed his lips firmly. A man of little imagination, he realized only that a dog was floating in the air and causing a disturbance. Ergo, the dog would have to come down.

Marching forward, Donovan placed his large hands on Angel's back and endeavored to press the beast down to safer ground. Raleigh automatically pushed up. Compressed thus painfully, Angel gasped, cursed softly, and bit the policeman.

Donovan staggered back, gritting his teeth. He withdrew his nightstick and came on again, looking dangerous. Fearing complications, Raleigh acted.

The dog seemed to leap through the air, to come violently in contact with Donovan's face. The two, man and beast, collapsed on the sidewalk, but did not remain there. Angel seized the opportunity of biting his tormentor again, after which he fled, Donovan in hot pursuit. Seeing that the spectacle was ended, the crowd dispersed.

So did Raleigh. He glanced at his wrist-watch, discovered that he couldn't see it, and continued on his errand. It didn't take long.

Fifteen minutes later he stepped invisibly into Meek's outer office, using his key. Silently he went into the laboratory, where the scientist still sat behind his desk.

"Okay," Raleigh said.

Meek had glanced up nervously.

"Oh, it's you. I was afraid—it wouldn't do for the reporters to come in yet. They mustn't know you were the invisible man instead of me. Everything all right?" He thrust a vial at Raleigh, who drank its contents.

A violent shock seized him and then let go. Meek's gaze, which had been wandering around the room, settled. He nodded.

"Good. You're visible again. Well, what happened?"

"Everything went off fine." Raleigh put his loot on the desk. Then the bell rang.

"I'm relieved," Meek smiled. "I didn't know how the stuff would work on a human being. So far I used it only on frogs and lower animals."

Raleigh repressed an impulse to wring the scientist's neck. Instead, he went to the door and admitted a horde of reporters. They emitted short, sharp cries and surrounded Meek's desk.

"You're just on time," said the latter. "Well? Are you satisfied?"

THERE were affirmative noises. A tall, cold-eyed man whom Raleigh did not recognize stepped forward.

"You made yourself invisible?" he asked.

"Yes."

"What a scoop!" chortled a reporter.

The cold-eyed man said, "Doctor Meek, you're under arrest."

In the stunned silence he exhibited a gleaming badge.

"Where's the money?"

Meek was a statue. But the reporters burst into a babble of excited ques-

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tions. The detective quelled them.

"The Fifth Security Bank on the corner has just been robbed. So—"

"You're crazy!" Meek yelped. "I'll sue you for slander! I—I—"

"Listen," the detective said. "I saw the whole thing. Banknotes. Packages of them. Floating through the bank and out the door. Banknotes don't have wings. I wouldn't have guessed what happened if I hadn't got talking to the reporter who was waiting outside the bank. You didn't get away with it, Meek—and you'd better make it easy for yourself. Where's the dough?"

Raleigh turned green. He met Meek's accusing stare and winced. He knew what the scientist must be thinking. Sure, Raleigh needed money to marry. It would have been easy for him to slip unobserved into the bank and—

"That's the man," Meek snarled, thrusting out a pudgy finger at his assistant. "I—I didn't make myself invisible. He did it for me. I was here all the time."

"Can you prove that?" the detective asked. "I thought you couldn't. It won't work, pal. There's too much evidence against you. Every reporter in this room is a witness. You left your card with all of 'em. Where's the money?"

Meek snatched for a red-labeled vial on the desk before him. The detective forestalled him. Handcuffs clicked.

"If that's the way you want it, okay," the lawman grunted. "Come along."

"Raleigh!" screamed the trapped Meek. "I'll kill you for this!"

The door burst open and Binnie appeared, dragging Angel after her.

"What—"

In brief, cogent syllables Dr. Meek explained the situation.

"Your boy friend robbed a bank and threw the blame on me. I—"

"Come *on*," said the detective, and dragged his protesting captive away. The reporters followed. Alone in the office, Binnie, Raleigh and Angel looked at one another.

The girl sobbed faintly and buried herself in Raleigh's arms.

"Oh, Rick, what's happened?"

He explained. "It wasn't my fault. You know that, Binnie, don't you?"

She hesitated. "Are you—sure?"

"Binnie! You know I wouldn't—"

"But it does look funny. I believe you, dear, but you have to admit—oh, can't we *do* something? Can't *you* do something?"

"What?" Raleigh asked hopefully.

BINNIE'S lips tightened. "You've got to save Dad. He can't prove his innocence. He may be sent to prison. Then—then I simply couldn't marry you, Rick."

Raleigh grunted. "But how could it have happened? Money floated out of the bank, but I was the only invisible man in existence."

"Were you?"

There was a little silence. Raleigh said slowly,

"Uh-huh. I get it. *Another* invisible man—but how?"

He considered. "Somebody else might have invented an invisibility elixir, but that's too much of a coincidence. We'll take it for granted that those vials on the desk are the only ones in existence."

"No," Binnie said. "There's more in the safe." She nodded toward a large wall-safe in one corner.

"Okay, but that's locked. Only your father knows the combination. There's more of the elixir and the antidote in the safe—but we can forget about that just now. Those vials on the desk are important."

Raleigh's eyes widened. "Come to

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think of it, I *did* have an idea that there were less of them."

"When?"

"After the reporters first arrived—Whoa! Listen to this, Binnie! Suppose one of that gang wasn't a reporter?"

"But—"

"No, listen! It's a perfect setup for a crook. Suppose he heard, somehow, what was going to happen today. Suppose he pretended to be a reporter, came in with the others, and swiped a couple of vials when nobody was looking. After he left, he could simply make himself invisible and rob the bank—and the blame would be thrown on your father."

"You've got it, I bet," Binnie agreed. "But what can we do?"

"Wait a minute." Raleigh was counting the vials. "Uh-huh. Two missing, besides the ones I used. One of the elixir and one of the antidote."

He shook his head. "I can't tell the police a story like that."

"Then you'll just have to get proof," Binnie said decidedly. "No, keep away from me. You get Dad out of this mess. You got him into it."

Touched to the quick by the unfair accusation, Raleigh gasped. Then his lips tightened.

"Okay," he nodded. "But if I do—will you marry me?"

"Yes," said Binnie, and Raleigh hurried out of the office.

CHAPTER III

Tough Guy

EVIDENCE. That was the thing. The whirlpool in Raleigh's brain gave little chance for coherent thought; but he knew, from the many detective stories he had read, that clues were vital. Where could he find them? At the bank, perhaps.

But it wasn't at the bank that Raleigh discovered a clue. It was across the street, near a vacant lot. And it consisted of small fragments of shattered glass, from which a subtle odor still rose.

Embedded in the glass was a soaked green label.

The antidote! Raleigh shut his eyes tightly, trying to visualize what had happened. Invisible, the crook had entered the bank and stolen the money. Then, fleeing, he had accidentally dropped the vial containing the antidote. That meant—

It meant that the culprit was still invisible. He'd have to remain invisible unless he could get more of the antidote!

How to catch an unseen thief? Raleigh rubbed his aching head. Sight was useless. When he himself had been invisible, only Angel had detected his presence.

Angel . . . bloodhounds . . . *that was it!* He'd set Angel on the trail. It was a long chance, but the only one.

It took Raleigh five seconds to get back to the house. Binnie was nowhere around. The office was empty.

"Angel!" he called. "Here! Dinner!"

A violent blow caught Raleigh on the chest. He sat down painfully, while a limp, warm, wet object began to pass rapidly over his face. Angel, it seemed, was pleased by the prospect of dinner.

"Oh, my God," Raleigh groaned. "That damned dog's invisible too."

It was true. The floor was a shambles, consisting of objects which had once reposed on the desk. Glittering glass shards were everywhere. Pushing away the unseen dog, Raleigh began to scrabble among the wreckage. Finally he sat back, sighing deeply.

Only two vials remained unbroken. Both were red labeled—the invisibility

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elixir. No trace of the antidote remained. But, Raleigh remembered, there was a good supply of it in the safe. He'd just get the combination from Meek and—

There was no time for that now. The scent might grow cold—perhaps was too cold already. He'd have to use an invisible bloodhound to track an invisible thief.

How?

Raleigh secured Angel's collar and leash. By dint of much effort, he finally adjusted things to his satisfaction and stood up, holding the loop of the leash in his hand. His teeth began to chatter.

It wasn't a pleasant sight. The leash stood out rigidly from Raleigh's fingers, ending in a dog collar that hung unsupported in empty air, bouncing up and down slightly. It was impossible to believe that Angel was really there. Raleigh, on a mad impulse, tried to stick his hand through the nothingness inside the collar, and got nipped.

"Okay," Raleigh groaned. "Try and behave, Angel. Quiet. To heel."

HE opened the door and departed, doing his best to ignore the collar and leash. It would have been easier to ignore an earthquake.

Luckily, the street was almost deserted. No one noticed anything amiss as Raleigh dragged the dog to his destination. There he pushed Angel's nose toward the broken vial on the sidewalk and muttered:

"Trail! Trail, stupid! Go get him!"

The bloodhound in the composite dog rose to the surface. With a deep bay Angel plunged away, snapping the leash out of Raleigh's hand. Then was seen an incredible sight which caused half a dozen people to go mad and sent a curvaceous blonde screaming into a saloon with wild gestures.

"Double Scotch!" she gasped to the bartender. "Quick! I just saw a man chasing a snake down the street, and it was the damnedest snake I ever saw!"

The frantic collar and leash sped on. Cursing softly, Raleigh pursued, his hand outstretched. Angel was on the trail. . . .

"A snake!" cried a uniformed policeman. He whipped out his service revolver and took steady aim, only to find the gun wrested from his hand by Raleigh. The cop tried to wrench free.

"Let go!" he shouted. "It'll bite somebody—"

"No, no!" Raleigh babbled. "It hasn't any teeth. It— it's an old snake. A pet. We've had it in the family for years. Don't shoot!"

There was a scuffle, terminated by Angel himself. A dog of honor, he had discovered that Raleigh was apparently in trouble. Giving up the trail momentarily, he returned and, waiting for an opportune moment, bit the policeman in the pants. This caused a distraction, and before the cop had recovered, Raleigh was around the corner, the leash again safely in his hand.

"Ground glass," he promised the dog. "That's what you'll get for dinner. With arsenic on the side. I'll tear you apart with my bare hands—after you find the guy I'm looking for."

But Angel had stopped. He was sniffing at a closed door. Raleigh opened it, revealing a flight of stairs that led up into dimness. A cheap rooming house, from which odors of cooking drifted down not too enticingly.

Angel plunged madly up, dragging Raleigh. One flight. Two. Three. The top story—

Before another door the dog halted. He sniffed, glanced at Raleigh—something the man did not, of course, know—and barked shortly. Nothing happened.

Raleigh's stomach had turned into

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ice. Behind this door, he realized, was his quarry. So what?

Heartily he wished the policeman had followed him. Unarmed, he could do little against an invisible crook who no doubt packed a rod. Well—he'd have to get help. Cops. Lots of them. Hundreds of them, Raleigh hoped. He turned to tiptoe away.

Just then the door swung open. Angel, in a generous effort to help, had hurled his weight against the panel, and the ancient lock gave way with a grunt. The door opened.

RALEIGH'S quick glance back showed him a cheaply furnished room, in the center of which stood a table set for one. A partially devoured steak lay on a platter. The room was empty.

Sweat burst out on Raleigh's forehead. He tiptoed in. Then he stopped. His stomach hurt. Something had jabbed him there.

"Don't move," said a low, deadly voice. "I mean, put up your hands. That's right."

"Ug—ug—I came to rent a room," Raleigh gasped.

"Yeah? You don't act surprised not to see me. I know you. Meek's sidekick. I saw you in his office. Now turn around and get into that room if you don't want a tunnel through you."

Raleigh obeyed. As he crossed the threshold, he dodged aside suddenly and cried,

"Angel! Get him!"

Nothing happened. From the table came a low grunt. The steak on the platter was vanishing in large bites. Angel wasn't interested in crooks at the moment. It wasn't often that he got a bone with such delectable meat on it.

"My dinner," said the crook bitterly, closing the door. "Oh, well. I was having a hell of a time. Kept putting the fork in my eye. This invisibility isn't all it's cracked up to be."

A key turned in the lock and flew away to disappear, apparently into the robber's pocket.

"Sit down."

Raleigh sat down on a rickety couch. He felt unseen hands patting him.

"No gat. Okay. How'd you find me? Never mind. I can figure it out. Rudy Brant's no sucker."

"Rudy Brant, eh?"

"Yeah. What's your handle?"

Raleigh told him. Then, summoning his courage, he went on.

"You'd better come along quietly. I know you've lost the antidote. You've got to remain invisible—"

"I'm glad you dropped in," Brant interrupted. "I was going to pay you a call anyhow. This antidote—where can I get some more of it?"

"You can't."

A jolting blow rocked Raleigh's head. He saw stars. There was a knife edge of hysteria in Brant's voice as he snarled,

"Don't get smart with me, wise guy! I—feel this." A sharp point dug painfully into Raleigh's stomach. "Feel that shiv? I can slice you up—"

"Don't," the other said faintly.

"Where's the cure?"

"Locked in Meek's safe. The rest of it got spilled."

"Yeah? That's what you say." The knife dug deeper.

"It's the truth," Raleigh gulped.

"Well—I guess so. That don't matter. You go open that safe. I'll be right behind you. I need the antidote—bad. I can't go on like this."

Raleigh found it difficult to speak.

"Sure, Brant. Glad to. Only—only I haven't got the combination. Wait a minute! Don't lose your head. Meek's the only man who knows how to open the safe."

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BRANT said slowly, "Where is he?"

"In jail—for bank robbery."

There was a low chuckle. "You're his stooge, huh? Well, get the combination from him and then open the safe. And don't get any funny ideas. I'll be right behind you." The knife wiggled a bit.

"Don't," Raleigh gurgled. "It tickles. I'll do it."

"Now!"

"Y—yes. Now."

"Well, what in hell are you waiting for?"

Raleigh got up and went to the door. The key flashed into the lock and turned. He sighed and reached for the handle . . .

A fine thing. At his heels was an invisible murderer. And one almost hysterical with fear, seemingly. Raleigh knew he was walking on quicksand. He dared not try to enlist aid. If he gave Brant the slightest reason for suspicion, it would be just too bad.

He'd have to wait his chance. Once he got inside the jail, to see Meek, things would be different. Surrounded by steel bars, the crook would be under a handicap.

Where was Angel? Raleigh whistled almost inaudibly, but there was no response. Probably the dog was still in the crook's room.

"Shut up," said a low voice.

"I was just—"

"Shut up and keep moving. Get a taxi."

Raleigh signalled for one. He got in, and the driver reached around and slammed the door. There was a muffled cry of pain, and Raleigh felt a body fall heavily against him. Profanity sizzled.

"Sorry, Mister," said the driver, turning a puzzled face. "Did I catch you in the door? I coulda sworn—"

"It's all right," Raleigh interrupted hastily. "The city jail. Hurry."

CHAPTER IV

Angel Gabriel

THE desk sergeant said Raleigh couldn't see Dr. Meek. Not yet, anyway. Then he turned away to glare at a small, wizened safe-cracker with a pious expression.

"The angels told me to bust that box," said the little man, apparently continuing with a long and lying story.

"Preacher Ben's a good name for you," the sergeant growled. "Angels—ha! You'll have plenty of time to see angels in the big house."

He swung on the protesting Raleigh. "I said 'no!' Get the hell out! You can see Meek tomorrow, maybe. Now scram."

Raleigh felt an invisible hand nudge him away. He was thinking desperately. He had to see the scientist—there was no time to waste. At any moment Brant's over-tense nerves might snap under the strain, and then murder would result. But how—

Suddenly Raleigh remembered the two vials of invisibility elixir he had slipped into his pocket before leaving Meek's home. Surreptitiously he felt for them. They were still there. His heart leaped exultantly.

A perfect hiding place from Brant! He'd make himself invisible; and then, in safety, he could slip into the jail and see Meek. After that, some plan could be worked out. But first of all, he had to escape from the murderous bank robber.

How could he manage to swallow the elixir unobserved?

There was a water cooler in the corner. Gingerly Raleigh walked toward it. His hand, hidden in his coat pocket, uncapped one of the vials. Palming the

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tiny tube, he took a paper cup from the container and filled it with water. Deftly he let the elixir spill into the cup.

No sound came from Brant. Had he noticed the stratagem?

Raleigh swallowed the water at a gulp. The familiar burning sensation raced down his gullet. Simultaneously he jumped aside, whirling.

The little safe-cracker before the bench let out a shrill cry.

"That guy! He's an angel! Now he's gone!"

For a second the sergeant's face was blank as he followed the prisoner's gesture. Then it cleared.

"Nuts," he remarked. "He just walked out. Now—"

"You dirty double-crossing rat!" said a high-pitched voice. "I'll cut off your ears and make you eat 'em!"

"Who said that?" the sergeant bellowed.

"Angels," the safe-cracker explained helpfully.

Raleigh ignored the invisible Brant's threat. The bank robber had realized the trick, but too late to do anything about it. Invisible, he couldn't find another invisible man. Unless, Raleigh thought with a shudder, he used Angel, who was still locked up in Brant's room.

Well, it was necessary to work fast. Raleigh waited till the inner door was opened, and then slipped through. Quietly he made his way to the cell block.

It didn't take him long to find Meek, who was sitting on the edge of his bunk, methodically ripping newspapers into tiny fragments. The scientist didn't look well in prison garments. The gleam in his eye was reptilian.

"Dr. Meek," Raleigh called softly.

The prisoner looked up, frowned, and went back to his paper-tearing.

"Doc! It's me—Raleigh. I'm invisible."

THAT interested Meek. His jaw dropped. He sprang up, went to the bars and stared through.

"Raleigh? What—"

"Sh-h! If they hear us . . . Listen." Swiftly he outlined what had happened.

"That's the set-up," Raleigh finished. "Now, for God's sake, give me the combination of the safe so I can get the antidote."

But Meek hesitated. "Wait a minute. You've still got a vial of the elixir on you?"

"Sure."

"I've a better idea. Give it to me. If I'm invisible, I can get out of here."

Raleigh fumbled in his unseen pocket and brought out the vial. Held within his palm, it was invisible. He dropped it, as he thought, into Meek's outstretched hand.

Cr-rack! Glass shattered on the cement floor.

"You bungling idiot!" Meek howled. "You did that on purpose!"

Raleigh gurgled helplessly. He made futile groping motions.

The scientist calmed down—like a Gila monster.

"You think I'm safer in jail, eh? I never trusted you, Raleigh! Now—"

"There's more of the elixir in the safe," Raleigh suggested. "Give me the combination, quick. I'll bring you another vial."

Meek breathed audibly. "And meanwhile this crook—Brant—will be invisibly snatching some of the antidote over your shoulder. Uh-huh. Once he's visible again, he can escape for good and all—and I'll stay here and rot. And that'll be all right with you."

The scientist's voice rose to a scream of fury.

"Like hell! You'll stay invisible till you get me out of this!"

There was little point in remaining, especially since guards were appearing

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from all directions. Raleigh returned to the room where he had left Brant. The desk sergeant and the safe-cracker were still arguing fruitlessly about angels. There was only one other person in the room, a uniformed patrolman —unless Brant was present.

"The angels told me to do it," the prisoner contended. "I can open any safe in the world if they—"

"What?" The exclamation was ripped involuntarily from Raleigh's lips.

"Who said that?" the sergeant roared.

"Angels," the prisoner remarked.

Raleigh sent a swift glance at the outer, swinging door. Beyond it was the street. If he could somehow manage to abduct the prisoner—the safe might be opened!

But how could he kidnap a man from the stronghold of the law?

Raleigh stealthily neared the patrolman, who was sitting in a corner, blinking. A stolid individual, yet perhaps with some imagination. It would help. Raleigh put his mouth close to the man's ear and whispered softly,

"You're going to die!"

RESULTS were more than satisfactory. The officer turned yellow and shook in every limb. He swiveled around, saw nothing behind him and began to gurgle.

Raleigh laughed nastily. "Down you come to hell with me," he whispered.

The invitation proved unacceptable. At any rate, the policeman fainted, slipping down noiselessly under the row of chairs. His absence went unnoticed.

That left the sergeant, a somewhat tougher egg. Raleigh slipped up behind the man's chair. Deftly he put his hands about the sergeant's throat and squeezed, not much. Nothing happened.

The officer remained perfectly motionless, except that he stopped talking. Dead silence fell over the room.

It grew strained. Raleigh withdrew his hands. The sergeant suddenly unbuttoned his collar. He looked fixedly at his prisoner and licked dry lips.

The invisible man began to pat the sergeant's cheeks with his palms. Under certain circumstances, this gesture may prove pleasant—even a caress. Always assuming that the hands are . . . visible.

Raleigh put his palms over the sergeant's eyes. Naturally, this didn't obscure the latter's vision in the least. But when a gloating voice whispered, "Guess who!" the officer's nerves crumbled with an almost audible crash.

Shrieking, the sergeant rose and fled.

"Angels," said the safe-cracker, with satisfaction.

Raleigh didn't care whether he was nuts or not, as long as he could open safes. With one bound he leaped over the desk, seized the prisoner by neck and pants and propelled him through the door. Before the startled crook could protest, he found himself in a taxi headed uptown.

Then Raleigh settled himself for the hysterical outburst he expected. He'd have to calm the little outlaw—explain to him, somehow, the circumstances. What had the sergeant called him?

"Preacher Ben," Raleigh said gently.

Ben's wrinkled face twisted in a smile.

"Hello, Gabriel," he beamed. "I expected you."

"But—hold on, pal. I'm not the angel Gabriel—"

At this moment a truck rushed precariously past the front bumpers, and the driver pressed the horn button. A hoarse blast sounded.

This occurrence confirmed Ben's suspicion.

"Horn and all," he nodded. "Good old Gabriel. Where are we going?"

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Raleigh almost swore with irritation, but somehow he felt that it would be a mistake to say "Hell!" at this particular moment. Instead, he murmured,

"I want you to open a safe for me."

Ben didn't seem surprised. "All right, Gabe. Do you mind me calling you Gabe? I feel like we're old friends, somehow."

"That's fine," Raleigh said, swallowing convulsively. "But about this safe—"

"Oh, I'll need tools. The police took mine away. But I can get them."

"How long will it take?"

"I dunno. Couple of hours, maybe."

"Swell," said Raleigh. "Here's the angle. I want you to fake a robbery. I'll show you where. I want you to open the safe and leave it open. Don't take anything. There's no money in it anyway. Got that?"

"Sure," said Preacher Ben. "Anything you say, Gabe."

CHAPTER V

Defiance

AFTER that things happened fast—but not fast enough. It took a long time to get the necessary articles for Ben. For some reason the stethoscope was the most difficult to secure. The job was finished at last, by noon the next day.

Raleigh slipped unnoticed into the house and found Binnie, telling her of the plan.

"Brant's watching this place, I'm sure," he said. "He knows I'll need the antidote for myself, and he expects your father gave me the combination to the safe. After Ben leaves, Brant will see the safe's open. Be sure and don't draw the curtains in the office."

"Dad's in court today," Binnie said sadly. "A preliminary hearing or something. I've got to go down and see what happens."

Something brushed up against Raleigh's leg. He jumped before hearing a familiar whine.

"Angel!" he said.

"Oh, yes. She came back."

The dog must have got out of Brant's room, then. Well, that helped.

Binnie left. Raleigh went into the office and waited. He glanced occasionally at the window, but saw nothing. Yet he felt sure that Brant was watching the house, which contained the crook's only means of salvation.

Glass tinkled from a distance. Raleigh flattened himself against the wall and waited. The door was swinging open . . .

Preacher Ben walked in, smiling. His eyes lighted as he saw the safe. Without wasting a moment he came forward, opening a black bag he held.

He knelt and extracted a stethoscope which he clamped in his ears. Ten minutes later the door of the safe swung outward.

Obediently Preacher Ben reached in and pretended to pick up various nonexistent objects. That was for Brant's benefit, if the crook were watching. Actually, Ben touched none of the dozens of little vials that lay scattered on the floor of the safe—which was otherwise empty.

"Wait a minute," Raleigh whispered, and was busy carrying out a certain plan he had worked out in detail previously. At last he stepped back and breathed,

"Now. Shut it."

Ben closed the door, but didn't lock the safe. He got up and left the room, and after that the house. He did not reappear, but it is presumed that his after-life was gladdened by his one encounter with the angel Gabriel.

Meanwhile Raleigh waited. Ben had

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left the door ajar, unfortunately, but the chance of closing it could not be taken now. Brant might already be invisibly in the room.

If he got away now with the antidote . . .

Raleigh felt in his pocket for the handful of vials he had put there after the safe had been opened. That was okay. Well . . .

He wondered how Binnie was getting on. She was in court now, watching her father. Raleigh hoped the old coot was squirming.

He glanced sharply at the door. Had it moved, very slightly? Had Brant arrived? There was no way of telling. And Brant was—armed!

IF the crook slipped from Raleigh's grasp, got out of the house with the antidote, it would be impossible to find him again.

Slowly the door of the safe opened.

Simultaneously Raleigh snapped,

"Sic him! Get him, Angel!"

He dived for the door as a gun blasted, ripping plaster from the wall, just behind where he had been standing.

Raleigh crouched on the threshold like a wrestler. There were noises coming from the safe, in the interior of which he had left Angel. Invisible man and invisible dog were having a disagreement. Suddenly a heavy weight cannoned into Raleigh, catching him by surprise despite himself.

There was an oath in Brant's high-pitched voice. Something exploded under Raleigh's chin, and he was flung back. A lucky blow—but it worked.

Brant tore free. His footsteps thudded across the carpet. The outer door was ripped open.

Sick with the realization of failure, Raleigh raced after the escaping crook. He burst out in the blazing sunlight of the street and stood looking around helplessly. Where was the invisible man?

Gone! Gone without a trace, amid the throngs on the sidewalk. The street was crowded at this hour.

Raleigh's stomach took an elevator dive. Then it halted as a familiar sound came to his ears. Angel was barking.

Heads were turning as the disembodied barks raced past. The dog, using his nose rather than his eyes, was pursuing Brant!

Raleigh sprinted after the sound. People went spinning as he tore into them. Cries of amazement and terror rose. A car swerved to the curb with a squealing of breaks.

"What's wrong?"

"Something hit me!"

A voice shouted, "That's Dr. Meek's house! The invisible man!"

"The invisible man!"

Through the tumult shrilled Angel's frantic barks. Raleigh plunged desperately in pursuit. Ignoring the red light at the corner, he darted into a stream of traffic. Not a car slowed. Their drivers saw nothing!

"The invisible man!"

The barks were louder. Raleigh heard a scuffle, saw a man topple sideward, yelling. Angel's cries were suddenly muffled.

A knife materialized out of thin air, clattering on the cement. Raleigh dived, kicking the weapon aside as he smashed into a bulky, unseen body. Brant screamed an oath. A gun barked, the bullet breaking a plate-glass window nearby.

Angel's teeth snapped. Raleigh tried to locate the gun amid a squirming mass of invisible arms and legs. Then he saw it, a few feet away, out of reach.

ANGEL saw it too. The misguided dog freed himself and rushed over

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to the weapon, seizing it in his jaws. He brought it back.

Both men snatched for the gun at the same moment. Angel, always ready to play, danced back out of reach. The legs of the surrounding mob swallowed her. Somebody fell over Raleigh and rolled away, yelling.

Brant's fingers were feeling for his attacker's eyes. Raleigh tried to get hold of Brant's throat. He grabbed the man's ears, instead. Since the crook was underneath, Raleigh began to bang Brant's head against the sidewalk.

After that, the fight was over.

Raleigh got up dazedly, keeping his hand on his captive's coat collar. The crowd was growing. If he drank the antidote now, it would mean long explanations . . .

Angel barked. Raleigh said, "Sic 'em, Angel! Go get 'em."

Frantic with valor, the dog obeyed. The crowd broke up into a riot. Invisible teeth were everywhere, nipping sharply. Raleigh slung Brant over his shoulder and departed.

He found a taxi, but hesitated. The driver would balk at invisible passengers. But luckily the man was in a nearby doorway, conversing with friends. Raleigh slung Brant's unconscious form into the cab, clambered under the steering wheel and started the car, heedless of the driver's sudden outcry.

Thus a "driverless" taxicab moved rapidly along the street, to the shocked alarm of many.

Sirens began to scream. Motorcycles pursued. As the cab halted outside the city hall, officers surrounded it.

"It's empty!" said one.

And it was. Raleigh was already inside the building, carrying Brant.

He tried several court rooms before finding the right one, which was packed due to the sensational nature of the case. Meek was on the stand, his round face choleric with rage at the questioning he had been undergoing. The judge, a skinny, bald old vulture, was peering through thick-lensed glasses and toying with his gavel.

The guard at the door was sent staggering aside. Raleigh sprinted down the aisle, halting only when he stood before the bench.

"Your Honor—" he began.

"Silence in the court!" the judge snapped, using his gavel. But Meek's eyes were glistening.

He sprang to his feet. "Rick! Is that you?"

"Silence!"

The scientist thrust out an imploring hand.

"Wait, your Honor. My assistant's here."

"Where?"

"He's invisible," said Meek.

The judge poured water from a pitcher and drank it hastily.

"This—this is most irregular—"

He stopped. Beneath him, on the floor, a man was becoming visible.

He was a short, squat fellow, with a drooping eyelid and a day's growth of black beard. He was unconscious.

"I poured the antidote down his throat," a voice from empty air explained. "Now I'll take some myself."

RICHARD RALEIGH reappeared, slightly battered, but grinning.

The judge drank more water. He said,

"So. It's true. Not just publicity. I'll be damned—*silence in the court!*" The gavel could not hush the rising tumult.

Brant was stirring. Officers sprang forward to seize him. Raleigh explained to the judge,

(Continued on page 132)

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PAGANINI—MAN

Almost incredible are the legends that cloak the name of the greatest violinist

WAS Niccolo Paganini, the world's greatest violinist, a human being or an incarnation of another world? No one knows. But there are, even today, more people who believe the latter than the former. Certainly, if Paganini *was* a mere human genius, he was by far the most weird and mysterious human who ever trod the earth.

Some time before his birth on February 18, 1784, in Genoa, Italy, his mother saw a vision. A strange, unworldly figure appeared to her in a vivid dream and said:

"Your coming child shall be the world's greatest violinist."

Although impressed with the vision Madame Paganini was somewhat skeptical. There had never been any great musicians or even particular musical ability in the family, although it is said that her husband strummed a guitar for spare-time amusement. Paganini's earliest years increased her distrust of the vision, for young Niccolo showed not the slightest interest in music.

Then, at the age of five, Niccolo Paganini died.

All traces of life vanished from the child's body and his sorrowing parents, with the aid of neighbors, wrapped the figure in a shroud and prepared it for burial. In the midst of the service, the mourners suddenly shrieked and fell back.

The body of little Niccolo Paganini was moving, stirring. As they watched breathlessly, the apparently dead child sat up in the coffin, stared dreamily at the gathered mourners and. . . . *asked for a violin.*

When an instrument was hastily secured, the five-year-old untutored child seized it and began to play music so incredibly weird and complex that many fled from the place, sure that the devil himself had claimed the childish body and given it his own nightmarish soul.

Niccolo's father, a crafty and mercenary man, cared not whether his son was human or demoniac. He only saw in the new power a chance to make a fabulous fortune. He immediately began to arrange concerts for the child prodigy and between times, he brutally forced Paganini to practice ten and twelve hours a day, although the child

EDITOR'S NOTE

We present here a little-known version of that strangest of all great musicians, Niccolo Paganini.

To the world of music, Maestro Paganini is the greatest violinist that ever drew bow. No violinist since or before his time has achieved his almost miraculous double-stops, left-hand pizzicato, harmonics and staccato.

Let it not be thought, however, that Paganini's laurels rest on his superb technique. The power and control of his tone and the great feeling with which he played fascinated and exalted the huge audiences that crowded his every concert from Vienna to Paris to London.

Author Joseph J. Millard has gone to considerable research to uncover the other side of Paganini's life; the side even his closest intimates could not understand.

Virtuoso, profligate, weird eccentric, Niccolo Paganini still remains the crowning ornament, the supreme violinist of an age when music rose to its greatest heights.

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OR DEVIL? by JOSEPH J. MILLARD

could instantly play almost any composition at sight.

ALREADY A MAESTRO

At the age of nine, he was taken by his father to a famous teacher but while awaiting an interview, Paganini seized a violin from a table and played a difficult composition so perfectly that the teacher believed a master had come to visit him. When he saw Paganini, he refused to teach him, saying that the child already knew more than the *maestro* himself.

Shortly afterward, Paganini sickened of his father's iron rule and broke away forever. From that time on, he never was known to practice at any time, although he could play a piece perfectly at first sight and wrote many compositions so difficult that no one else then or since has ever been able to play them.

Even his technique of playing was a mystery, producing countless weird and incredible tones that no other musician could duplicate. The secrets of his playing were jealously guarded by Paganini, who refused to let most of his compositions be written or published, and died with his best works and his secrets still locked in his own strange mind.

With such an eerie beginning, it is small wonder that the people believed Paganini a demon. This belief was heightened by the man's physical likeness to Satan. He was very tall and thin, with wild black hair, hypnotic eyes and a somber countenance that seemed to radiate vast powers of evil.

MACABRE GENIUS

At his first concert in Vienna, he played a piece of his own composition, the macabre "Witches' Dance" that left the audience sick with horror at the hellish evil embodied in its unearthly notes. Halfway through the number, people began to moan and faint and one woman arose shrieking, to cry that she could see Satan himself enshrouding the figure of Paganini, guiding the bow with his own hand.

Soon afterward, people began to point out two women, possessed of a strange, evil beauty who attended every one of Paganini's concerts, smiling at him as he played. Afterward, it was reported, the women were driven away in a coach drawn by coal black horses with eyes that gleamed lurid flames in the darkness. People began to either shrink back from Paganini's presence or press forward to touch and pinch him, to see if he were flesh and blood or only a demon without substance.

During the height of his fame, the eerie musician would disappear for long periods of time. Some said that he retired to a little farm in Italy, but most people whispered of far less innocent pursuits during these disappearances. At any rate, during one of them Paganini lived for two years with a beautiful singer named Antonia Bianchi, who bore him a son who was named Achillio.

PROFLIGATE EXISTENCE

During his entire career, Paganini was notorious for his licentious orgies, his gambling and hints of even worse debauches. In 1838 he opened a gambling resort in Paris so rampant with evil that the government refused to issue a license, and much of Paganini's fortune was wiped away in its subsequent failure.

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But a deadly cancer of the throat was slowly eating away the life of this strange personage. Finally he retired from his concerts to a villa near Parma, Italy, and forsook his violin to suffer in silence.

Then suddenly, one day, Paganini called for his favorite violin, a Guarnerius given him by a wealthy French merchant after his own had been pawned to pay gambling debts, and began to play music so weird and unearthly that it transcended any of his previous compositions. Those who heard it fell in a swoon or fled from the hellish sounds.

In the midst of a particularly eerie passage, the sound of the violin ceased. When servants gathered enough courage to enter the room, Niccolo Paganini was dead.

The son, Achillio, for whom Paganini had always had a great affection, claimed the body and had it embalmed. But when he applied to the Church for burial permission, the Bishop of Nice refused to allow such an obvious servant of Satan to profane a holy burial ground.

PAGANINI'S WEIRD BURIAL

Even when Paganini's body was first removed to a hospital for embalming, the patients were terrified by mysterious groans and shrieks that came from the room where he lay. Later, when the body was laid away in a shed on his Villa Franca, such a torment of cries and moans came from the impromptu crypt that no one would venture near.

For five long years the body lay unburied, and during the whole time the unearthly cacophony of demoniac noises was heard from Paganini's resting place. Finally the son, after five years of unremitting effort, gained permission to bury the body in the little churchyard of the villa itself. This was finally done in 1845—Paganini had died on May 17th, 1840—and the weird noises ceased forever.

But the problem of Paganini, human being or fiend incarnate, is as alive today as it was then. And the few compositions of his that survived, many of which no mortal hand can play today, embellish rather than detract from the mystery.

THE ELIXIR OF INVISIBILITY

(Continued from page 129)

"That's the real bank robber, your Honor. He—"

"Money!" one of the policemen said. "His pockets are stuffed with it!"

The judge used his gavel again. "Calm down, please. You—" He pointed at Raleigh. "Take the stand. I want to ask you some questions . . ."

The questions were answered, though Raleigh could not keep his eyes off Binnie, who sat in the front row, looking more than ever like an angel. He scarcely realized it when the judge had finished and he was requested to step down.

Reporters were fleeing excitedly.

"Meek's name cleared! And Brant's got a record! What a scoop!"

Amid the commotion, Raleigh seized Binnie's hand and found Dr. Meek. The scientist was beaming in triumph. He even smiled at his assistant.

"Well, well. Thank you, Raleigh." Suddenly the blue eyes went reptilian. *"What d'you want?"*

"I want to marry Binnie—"

The chandelier rocked. Dr. Meek had said "no" that emphatically.

Raleigh looked swiftly at the girl, who nodded. Two hands lifted as one. And—quite suddenly and unexpectedly—Binnie Meek and Richard Raleigh disappeared. *(Concluded on page 142)*

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JONGOR OF LOST LAND

(Concluded from page 57)

"Your darned right it is," said Alan. "And whether the country knows it or not, it owes you a debt for what you did tonight, John Gordon. You will probably never get paid, things being what they are."

"I do not want a reward," he said. His eyes sought those of the girl. "What I have is reward enough."

"Some day," he continued, "we will return here. In your — my — world there must be wise men who can profit by studying the works of the Muros. We will return with them, and live again in Lost Land for awhile. But now we will go and see what lies beyond the mountains."

NOT that day, nor the next, but days later, the chattering remnants of the Murians watched the departure of a young fellow and a girl obviously very much in love with him.

"The great giant goes," the Murians said.

"And the girl who was to have been the bride of the sun," said a third excitedly, "see how carefully the great giant helps her up."

Jongor was saying softly, "To the pass, little one. And keep your scaly snout to the front so you can see where you are going. Otherwise I will punch you in the eye."

Not that such drastic treatment was necessary. For a few minutes later Alan Hunter took up where Jongor had left off.

"Forward, my lumbering lummox! Get ye hence, O scourge of unnumbered garbage dumps. And look ye not back! Because if you do, you're going to blush like hell. The way your master and his girl friend are carrying on is positively a scandal!"

GUNS Pointing Up!

After too many years as a military step-child anti-aircraft artillery is coming into its own as an important defense weapon! In an authoritative discussion, Lieutenant Robert A. Rankin tells all about modern anti-aircraft guns, height finders, gun directors, searchlights, sound locators, and anti-aircraft ammunition. Read how anti-aircraft artillery, in its present stage of high development, is one of the most important factors in any scheme of the national defense . . . how the United States at last will be able to cope with the possibility of an aerial invasion. Don't miss this intensely interesting article in the big

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Quiz Page

The following quiz has been prepared as a pleasant means of testing your knowledge of things scientific and pseudo-scientific. We offer it solely for the pleasure it gives you and with the hope that it will provide you with many bits of information that will help you to enjoy the stories in this magazine. If you rate 50% correct in your answers, you are considerably ahead of the average. Give yourself 3 points for each correct answer.

TRUE OR FALSE

1. 151½ carats make one ounce (troy). True.... False....
2. Scoria is a substance given out by volcanoes. True.... False....
3. Stalactites are limestone formations jutting upward from the bottom of a cave. True.... False....
4. The amount of hydrogen in the atmosphere increases with the altitude. True.... False....
5. Isobaric lines are lines drawn through places having the same mean temperature. True.... False....
6. Fireless steam locomotives use electricity for motive power. True.... False....
7. There is no erosion on the moon. True.... False....
8. Gunpowder consists of potassium chlorate, 75%; charcoal, 15%; and sulphur, 10%. True.... False....
9. A centrifuge is a round insect with a red dot on the center of the thorax. True.... False....
10. In an annular eclipse, the umbra of the moon's shadow touches the earth's surface. True.... False....
11. Sinus iridum is a cavity in the head. True.... False....
12. The craters Tycho, Copernicus, Kepler and Plato have ray systems. True.... False....
13. An ellipse is a conic section. True.... False....
14. The density of the sun exceeds that of the earth. True.... False....
15. The superior planets do not exhibit the whole cycle of phases that the moon shows. True .... False....

A SCIENCE-FICTION NIGHTMARE

Pick out 8 errors in the following paragraph:

Nat ran swiftly to his rocket ship, entered it and took off over the Lunar Sea, missing the waves by scant inches. Rapidly the moon dropped behind as the speed mounted. Suddenly the ship lurched sideward.

Nat peered out of the right window, and saw that there was a jagged hole in the left wing, no doubt caused by a comet. Due to the fact the ship was travelling at the terrific speed of 5000 m.p.h., the wind resistance set up by the hole was noticeable even in the rare air of space, and was causing the ship to lurch.

Nat throttled down the engine to lessen the pressure on the wing, and headed for Mars. A dull roar to the left attracted his attention. A meteor swarm was heading for his ship at a terrific speed. It illuminated the heavens to the right, like a river of fire.

The roar of its approach was deafening. With a sudden burst of speed, Nat evaded the swarm, and settled down for the two-hour run to Mars.

A MATTER OF CHOICE

1. A very hard and durable building stone consisting of quartz, mica and feldspar is known as (A) brick, (B) granite, (C) marble, (D) sandstone.
2. An artichoke is (A) a sunflower with edible tubers, (B) a tropical salad fruit, (C) a species of cabbage, (D) an animal.
3. Ursa Major is (A) a northern constellation, (B) a zodiacal constellation, (C) a southern constellation, (D) a little-known civil war general.
4. A discharge of electricity from elevated objects is known as (A) sastrugi, (B) lightning, (C) static, (D) St. Elmo's fire.
5. Columbus could have prevented scurvy among his sailors if he had food containing (A) vitamin X, (B) Vitamin A, (C) Vitamin C, (D) Vitamin E.

WHO'S WHO IN CHEMICALS

Fill in chemical names beside the common names of the following (chemical substances):

1. Aqua fortis .....
2. Brimstone .....
3. Carbolic acid .....
4. Hypo .....
5. Baking soda .....
6. Chalk .....
7. Muriatic acid .....
8. Caustic potash .....
9. Cinnabar .....
10. Epsom salts .....

(Answers on page 140)

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»»» Introducing «««

THE AUTHOR

JULIAN S. KRUPA Illustrator

I was born in Poland on January 7, 1913, and came to America long before my ability to remember was developed. However, I do remember that I was interested in drawing from the first, and even before I was four years old I was at it, using up a lot of white paper with drawings that had significance only to my own mind.

The first time my mother took me downtown, I saw a drawing set in a store window, and there was nothing else for her to do than buy the outfit for me—or else. The "or else" consisted of kicking and yelling and a firm decision to remain right there until I got what I wanted. It didn't matter much to me that I promptly proceeded to wreck the outfit the minute I got home. I knew there were more where that came from.

JULIAN S. KRUPA

However, even with this early start, I didn't get much of anywhere with art work until about 1933. At that time I took a correspondence course and discovered that art was one thing you couldn't master through the mail. I decided to get a teacher, and it proved to be a good idea, because I progressed rapidly thereafter.

For nearly three years I free-lanced, with some rather ordinary success, then I secured a job with a Polish newspaper doing rotogravure layouts, lettering, and all the routine work that goes with art work, and which the public doesn't even realize is art work.

It was while I worked for this publication that I finally put down on paper an idea that had been boiling in my brain for a long time. The result was a cartoon strip done in Polish, patterned after "Flash Gordon." I called it "The Adventures of Richard Arnold." I believe I had the most fun of my early career working on this strip, and I put a lot of work into it. Especially since I wrote the story also.

I get a great kick out of illustrating for FANTASTIC ADVENTURES, and an even greater kick out of reading the story before I illustrate it. These science fiction authors sure do have plenty of imagination, and it gives me a lot of opportunity to use my own imagination in creating illustrations to fit the story.

Each illustration I do proves more and more interesting to me.

I am very much interested in what the readers say about my work, and I am anxious to know what they think, and to receive any suggestions they might offer. I believe they want an illustration which is "every inch a picture" and I try to make each of them concise, definite, and different. I don't like these hazy, hurriedly sketched drawings I've often seen in other pulp magazines.

I have one fault (the only one I'm willing to admit, although I'm ashamed of it) and that is, laziness. However, I work from five to eight hours on a drawing, so I have that much to my credit.

I am also interested in music, and can play several instruments. I have played with several orchestras, and have conducted my own band. I have also played in a symphony orchestra, and I like good music. However, my greatest hobby now is photography, and I own two movie cameras in addition to other ordinary cameras. Amateur movies are my hobby, and I run off many thousand feet of film at every opportunity. I never go anywhere without taking my camera along.

(Editor's note. Julian S. Krupa today is staff artist on the roster of *seven* magazines, including *Amazing Stories, Fantastic Adventures, South Sea Stories, Popular Photography, Radio News, Flying & Popular Aviation,* and *Pets.* He has proven to be one of the most able artists we have contacted in recent years.)

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READER'S PAGE

"KICK-IN-THE-TEETH"

Sirs:

What a yarn. WHAT A YARN! Man, I liked that kick-in-the-teeth ending too. What am I talking about? 'Bout "The Strange Voyage Of Hector Squinch." As far as I'm concerned, it was the only story in the August issue. A *fantasy* fan.

Kay Benton,
5041 Main—Apt. 2,
Norwood, Ohio.

Glad you liked it, Kay. We've got more of that kind coming up—and how!—Ed.

WHY DAN HANLEY WON'T RETURN

Sirs:

The reason I am an avid fan of *Fantastic Adventures* is because of the colorful and active portrayal on the March issue.

When will a John Carter or Kirk, The Wanderer come to FA? I would like to know why Phil Nowlan's Dan Hanley won't return.

A. Stroffolino,
107-41 49th Ave.,
New York, N. Y.

John Carter is coming soon, in our companion magazine, AMAZING STORIES. And Burroughs is doing a yarn for FA too! Dan Hanley won't be back because his creator, Phil Nowlan, we must announce with heartfelt regret, recently passed away.—Ed.

REMEMBER? SURE WE DO!

Sirs:

Remember, I said that the June issue was nearly the best one you put out? Well, the August issue is way ahead of it. This really *is* the best one. The stories were all so good that I hate to place them, but here goes.

"The Strange Voyage of Hector Squinch", takes first by a mile. This was the only story I had no trouble rating. Next comes "The Fertility of Dalrymple Todd." I don't know how Bond gets away with it—no science in the story at all, but wonderfully written. "The Golden Princess" particularly makes up for Williams' boner in the June issue. The over, incidentally, was one of the best ever featured on *Fantastic*. Other stories couldn't stand the pace set by the leaders.

Wallace Buchholz,
330 Spaulding Ave.,
Ripon, Wisconsin.

We feel pleased to see that we've given you another "best." We hope we can keep it up!—Ed.

A GOOD COVER

Sirs:

Your cover for August by H. W. McCauley is the best piece of art work I have seen on any fantasy magazine for months and months.

Robert Moore Williams' story, adapted from the cover, is also good, despite the rather overworked gangster and underworld element. "The Golden Princess" is the top story this time.

David Wright O'Brien, Donald Bern, and Festus Pragnell all had splendid stories. I agree that you are now actually printing some fine fantasy, whereas in the past the science element rather crowded out the unusual.

I was also pleased to see your announcement regarding J. Allen St. John, whose fine covers I remember from way back when.

I can't understand why so much noise is being made about the size of the magazine. The story is the thing! In my opinion, if all those vehement remarks made about the size were aimed either for or against the stories, the editor would know a lot more about what type of yarns to print.

Duane W. Rimel,
918 7th St.,
Clarkston, Wash.

Yes, we now have real fantasy. More in this issue, Williams—Gardner—Norman—Kuttner. And how do you like that grand J. Allen St. John cover? We think it's a fine painting.—Ed.

EDWARD E. SMITH, Ph.D.

Sirs:

It would seem to a casual observer that Milton Kaletsky stuck his neck out plenty in "Have We A Sixth Sense?" He writes: ". . . the brain doesn't vibrate. Therefore thought waves do not exist." Wow! How he covers ground! While the brain as a whole may not vibrate—but, by the way he can't prove that statement—it is probably neither necessary nor functionally desirable that it should do so in order to send out something analogous to what Kaletsky so loosely calls "waves." Molecules certainly "vibrate," even in the brain; and it would seem eminently possible that molecular aggregates might vibrate and send out "waves" which, although not detectable by our present instruments, might very well affect receptors of the proper condition and magnitude.

He states dogmatically that waves are of two types—and of *only* two types. In this statement he assumes that science has learned all there is to know about "waves"; whereas what science

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really knows about such phenomena is probably only a very small fraction indeed of the as yet unknown truth. There are two theoretically possible complete spectra with which science is as unfamiliar as was the science of the Middle Ages with that of electro-magnetics, for lack of tools with which to touch them. Two? There may be dozens!

Kaletsky takes as premises statements which are neither axiomatic nor proven—which in fact may very well be entirely false—and from them he draws conclusions to which he would have the reader give all the weight of cosmic verity.

I am not arguing here as to whether or not man has a sixth sense, nor as to the actuality of telepathy or clairvoyance. I am, however, protesting against the use of such faulty, unscientific logic and reasoning in an article which is supposed to be science, not fiction. I am also giving it as my opinion that Mr. Kaletsky has not proved his point; that SF writers are as free as ever to use thought-waves and the like. If anything, freer; for it seems to me that his arguments (?) weaken his position far more than they strengthen it.

Edward E. Smith, Ph.D.
313 Homecrest Road,
Jackson, Michigan.

We were rather hoping someone would write a blast about this article, because we admit we felt one was needed. We published the article for what it was worth, since, lacking real proof, opinions of this kind should be aired. You've given us the other side, and danged if we don't like it! Thanks, much, Ed!—Ed.

SUPERB QUALITIES

Sirs:

I wish to congratulate you on the superb qualities of the August issue. For one thing, the cover was well done. By all means, more by McCauley.

At first I was inclined to believe that your large size issues were much better, but now I am inclined to believe they are not. The story I liked most in this issue was "The Golden Princess." Funniest, in my estimation, was "The Strange Voyage Of Hector Squinch."

As for the matter of FA being cheap looking, I heartily disagree. It is very attractive and stands out in the better class magazines. In regard to having FANTASTIC in capital letters on the cover, I also disagree. It makes FA stand out as something different and unique.

Not only have you given this mag a new freshness, but you've given it new life. CONGRATULATIONS!

John Cunningham,
2050 Gilbert Street,
Beaumont, Texas.

(Concluded on page 140)

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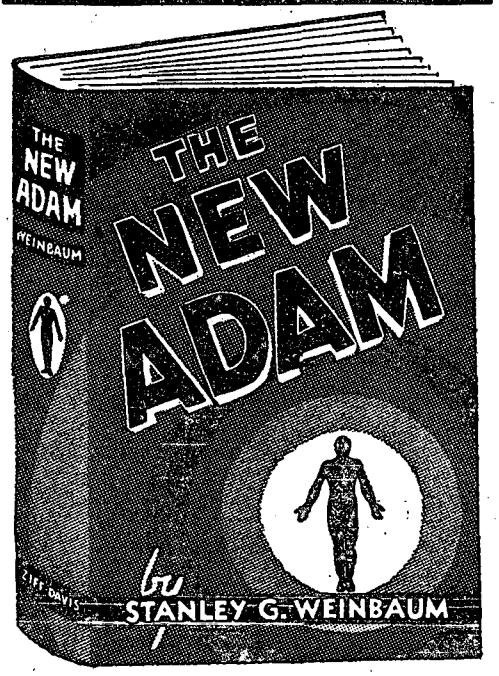
A SUPER STORY OF A SUPERMAN



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SEPTEMBER ISSUE

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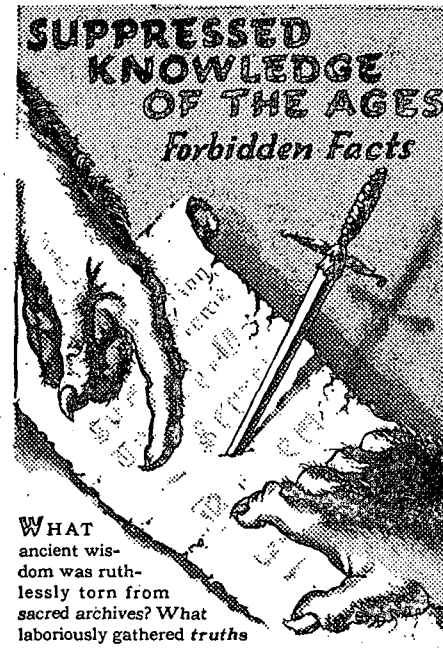

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28x4.75-19	2.45	1.25
29x4.75-20	2.50	1.25
29x5.00-19	2.65	1.25
30x5.00-20	2.65	1.25
5.25-17	2.90	1.35
28x5.25-19	2.90	1.35
29x5.25-19	2.95	1.35
30x5.25-20	2.95	1.35
31x5.25-21	3.25	1.35
5.50-17	3.25	1.40
29x5.50-19	3.25	1.40
29x5.50-19	3.35	1.45
6.00-17	3.40	1.40
30x6.00-18	3.40	1.40
31x6.00-19	3.40	1.40
32x6.00-20	3.45	1.55
33x6.00-21	3.65	1.55
32x6.50-20	3.75	1.75
6.00-16	3.75	1.45

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Size	Tires	Tubes
30x3½	$2.35	$0.95
31x4	2.95	1.25
32x4	2.95	1.25
33x4	2.95	1.25
34x4	3.25	1.35
32x4½	3.35	1.45

Size	Tires	Tubes
32x4½	$3.45	$1.45
34x4½	3.45	1.45
30x5	3.65	1.65
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35x5	3.95	1.75

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Size	Tires	Tubes
34x7	$10.95	$4.65
38x7	10.95	4.65
36x8	11.45	4.95
40x8	13.25	4.95

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Size	Tires	Tubes
7.50-20	$6.95	$3.75
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ABOUT THE FEATURES

(Concluded from page 137)

Sirs:

The Editor's Notebook should be longer. That's one place where the space isn't wasted. Ye Ed's section comes before the stories, when I get a new FA! "Romance Of The Elements" is pretty dry, but it will do. Fantastic Hoaxes is interesting. Quiz Page is good, but can't you ask such questions as "who wrote such and such?" or "what was so-and-so's first story?"

Reader's Page is really great! It sure tells you what authors are favorites or what stories went over big. Correspondence Corner is very good.

Your illustrations. Paul is an asset to your magazine. Krupa is too, when he lays aside his rigid technical methods and fixes up pictures like those for "The Man The World Forgot" and "Captives Of The Void." Stockton Mulford is not fitted for science fiction illustrating. Paul is your best cover man, with Krupa and McCauley right behind him.

As to the stories, I must say that you have been picking some classy ones lately.

Who wrote "50 Miles Down?" Peter Horn, or Henry Kuttner? And what happened to "The Laboratory Monsters" scheduled a long time ago?

Get yarns from Manly Wade Wellman (best in the field), Edmond Hamilton (good on adventure), Oscar J. Friend (he can really turn out good work), Kent Casey (also good at adventure), Robert Bloch (he could do a satire if he tried), Milton Kaletsky (remember his "Revolt Of The Ants" in *Amazing?*), A. R. Steber (he hasn't hit a bad yarn yet!) and Arthur K. Barnes (his works have a different touch).

Alfred Edward Maxwell,
545 East Madison St.,
Opelousas, La.

QUIZ ANSWERS

(Quiz on page 134)

TRUE OR FALSE

1. True.
2. True.
3. False—they hang from the roof.
4. True.
5. False—isothermal lines are the lines drawn through places of the same mean temperature.
6. False.
7. True.
8. False—it should be potassium nitrate, 75%.
9. False.
10. False.
11. False—it is a bay on the moon.
12. False—Plato has none.
13. True.
14. False.
15. True.

(Concluded on page 142)

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LITTLE did Quirk Conavan know when he took off from Mars in his tiny space-rocket that he'd come face to face with a fantastic monster . . . a six-legged, slim-waisted, chitin-armored creature with two lobster-like claws! But there it was . . . a living, natural fighting machine!

How Conavan discovered this incredible machine-like monster and escaped from its treacherous death-dealing claws, marked the beginning of a series of thrilling adventures for this interplanetary agent on the wicked world of Io!

Read how Quirk Conavan, one of the most colorful figures of the Solar System, established an honest and democratic system of self rule on Io; how this special agent from Mars brought law and order to a world that was rapidly being given over to lawlessness and rule by might, rather than right.

Don't miss this great story by Jack West . . . one of the six thrilling yarns brimming with unusual adventure, exciting action, and amazing science . . . in the big

OTHER GREAT STORIES IN THE OCTOBER ISSUE Include:

RESCUE INTO THE PAST—by Ralph Milne Farley. Barney Baker went into the past to Fort Randolph and 1776 to get an all-important diary for a law case. But when he fell in love, a weird thing happened . . .

THE VOYAGE THAT LASTED 600 YEARS—by Don Wilcox. What strange course would life take for a group of people isolated on a huge space ship bound for a world 600 years away? Here's a tremendous tale of love, hate, intrigue, and danger in space!

THE DAY TIME STOPPED MOVING—by Bradner Buckner. Dave Miller didn't want to live. He held a pistol to his temple, pulled the trigger . . . and time stopped! He found himself trapped in a world frozen in an endless second . . .

RAIDERS OUT OF SPACE—by Robert Moore Williams. Two American airmen, flying for defeated France, roared out over the Atlantic in a desperate cross-ocean attempt to escape the Nazi blitzkrieg . . .

October Issue

AMAZING STORIES

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(Concluded from page 140)

A SCIENCE-FICTION NIGHTMARE

1. The Lunar Seas contain no water, so Nat could not "miss the waves by scant inches."
2. If Nat looks out of the right window, he cannot see the left wing. He would have to look out the left window.
3. The hole in the wing was caused by a meteorite. A comet would have demolished the whole ship.
4. There is no air in space, thus there would be no wind resistance.
5. As there is no air in space, Nat would not have been able to hear the approach of the meteor swarm.
6. If you hear something on the left, it does not appear on the right.
7. As there is no air in space, the meteors would not be visible, as they depend upon friction with air to cause them to burn.
8. At 5,000 M.P.H., Nat could not get to Mars from the moon in two hours.

A MATTER OF CHOICE

1. B.
2. A.
3. A.
4. D.
5. C.

WHO'S WHO IN CHEMICALS

1. Nitric Acid.
2. Sulphur.
3. Phenol.
4. Sodium thiosulphate.
5. Sodium bicarbonate.
6. Calcium carbonate.
7. Hydrochloric acid.
8. Potassium hydroxide.
9. Mercury sulphide.
10. Magnesium sulphate.

THE ELIXIR OF INVISIBILITY

(Concluded from page 132)

"Come back here!" the doctor yelled. He turned toward the bench. "Your Honor, I appeal—"

The judge was lifting his water glass to his lips. He did not notice a small vial hanging in empty air, emptying its contents into the water. He drank long and thirstily . . .

"Gosh!" said an awed voice. "Now the judge is gone too!"

It was a scene long remembered in the annals of the law. Newspapers featured it that night. Riot was an underestimate. Through the confusion Meek ploughed like a spitting cobra, his wild gaze vainly searching for people who weren't there any more.

"Where are they?" he shouted. "Where's my daughter? Where's that double-crossing assistant of mine?"

"Where's the judge?" asked a baffled clerk.

There was a lull in the noisy confusion. And it was at this point that practically everybody in the court room heard, from a distant corner, a disembodied voice which said benignly:

". . . I now pronounce you man and wife."

It was due to Dr. Meek's unrestrained remarks at that moment that he was subsequently fined fifty dollars for contempt of court.

CORRESPONDENCE CORNER

Charles Richard Dutton, 17, Box 25, Bennock Road, Stillwater, Me., would like to correspond with those interested in nature. . . . Elgee Whipp, Box 335, Opelousas, La., is desirous of pen pals of the male sex between ages of 15 and 20. . . . Jerome Rabnett, 596—9th St., East, Owen Sound, Ontario, Canada, is interested in hearing from fans, and trading magazines; send lists. . . . Frederick Weiner, Ambassador Apts., 14 Buswell St., Boston, Mass., would like to obtain the address of a correspondent who signs "A Dumb Sailor," and who lives in Honolulu. . . . Wilbur J. Widmer, 6109 Park Ave., West New York, N.J., is willing to trade a practically new copy of Robert Baker's textbook, Astronomy, 1933 edition, for another textbook: mathematics, calculus, mineralogy, geology. . . . Robert McTyre, 202-09—43rd Ave., Bayside, N. Y., would like to hear from boys around 15 yrs. who are interested in fraternities, stf., etc. . . . Melvin Henriksen, 1385 Nelson Ave., Bronx, N. Y., is anxious to exchange "City of Peril" for "After Worlds Collide" or some other science fiction book. . . . Robert Mastell, 2611—6th Ave., E., Hibbing, Minn., is interested in corresponding with those interested in astronomy, philosophy, science fiction, world history and geography, checkers, postcards, and science in general; age 18. . . . Donald H. Luck, 17, Audley St., North Hobart, Tasmania, would like to exchange science fiction magazines, current and pre-1937, for mint stamps or postcards. . . . Antoine St. Jacques, 113 N. Charlotte, Ont., Canada, is desirous of correspondents who are stamp collectors, boy or girl about 16 yrs., and who will

(Concluded on page 144)

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KERRIGAN WAGES A COPRA WAR

KERRIGAN'S revolver smacked down . . . Deagan never knew what struck him. Blood gushed from his scalp, and from his cheek where the front sight slashed in passing. He staggered, mumbled, flopped face down in the brush!

Beautiful Malia was too surprised to move or speak. She stood there, her shapely native body outlined by the gleam of the palm oil on her skin.

Kerrigan caught her arm. "Not a word! Get Nito away as quickly as you can. No telling what'll happen when Weaver finds out!"

Jim Kerrigan pointed, and told Malia where his canoe was hidden. "Wait for me there. I have some *business* with these fellows!"

What fate awaited Kerrigan as he sought square-faced, square-shouldered Weaver; swarthy, horse-faced Laporte; and stocky, bullet-headed Schwartz?

Don't miss *Kerrigan Wages a Copra War* by E. Hoffmann Price . . . one of the six exciting tales you'll thoroughly enjoy in *South Sea Stories* for October!

Read how two-fisted Jim Kerrigan was robbed, drugged and stranded in Papeete; how he met and fell in love with adorable Lili Dupre; how his boldness and vigor landed him a job as a supervisor of a coconut plantation on Taka-Taka Island!

Here is a gripping story that's guaranteed to thrill you from beginning to end . . . so go to your nearest newsstand now and be among the first to read this and the other tales brimming with intriguing action and romance of the South Seas!

6 THRILLING STORIES — Including

☆ **MORUA FIGHTS FOR LOVE**—by William O'Sullivan. Muriel May had wealth in her lovely hands . . . and then the *Oceania* hit a derelict and went to the bottom. Marooned on *Oiceloa*, the problem of landing a man became more complicated when Morua, island girl, brought her pagan beauty into play.

☆ **MYSTERY ON DEAD MAN REEF**—by George Armin Shaftel. John Gregg landed on Puna-Puka under false colors. Then when danger came, he found himself forced to admit he was a thief and forfeited his claim to reliability. He couldn't save the life of the only man who could prove his innocence.

☆ **TREACHERY ON CAMOIA**—by Alfred Bester. Johnny Maverick waited three years to make good, so that he could marry the girl he left behind. Then she came to the same island, and his best friend turned traitor, to steal his business and his girl! But someone else was treacherous too . . . his own girl!!!

Plus—MANY OUTSTANDING FEATURES AND ARTICLES—All in the BIG

OCTOBER ISSUE

South Sea STORIES

AT ALL NEWSSTANDS AUGUST 20 — Be sure to get your copy!

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Don't let THE DOGNAPPER CATCH YOU *Napping!*

Do you know that there are 50,000 dogs stolen in the United States every year? Who are the thieves? How do they work? How can we prevent their depredations? Read *Dognappers* in the September PETS! In this intensely interesting article, Robert Forejt, Chicago poundmaster, tells just what precautions should be taken by dog owners to prevent theft of their pets. Remember, these dognappers are clever, and dogs don't talk!

TEACH YOUR DOG *to count!*

Of the various tricks which a dog can be taught to do probably one of the most interesting is teaching him to count. John H. Klok, outstanding dog trainer, shows exactly how *you* can teach your dog, regardless of size, breed, or age, to count to 2, 3, 4, and 5, and this in any rotation! If you follow the simple instructions patiently and persistently from five to ten minutes twice a day, within a month your dog will be a good counter.

BANDIT DOG *of Chicago!*

Old Wary was great in size, strength, courage, ferocity, and ingenuity! Developing from a landless wanderer, warring for his own stomach, into an organizer and leader, and then into an autocrat who forced others to work for him. *Old Wary* seemed to know and enjoy the fear he had excited. Read how this monster of a dog ruled his gang with an iron jaw . . . how this daring canine thief and his band of cunning servitors terrorized Chicago for years; prowled deserted streets at night in search of meat; robbed henroosts; plundered refrigerators of beef and milk; slew purebred dogs; chased cats for diversion! A true story by H. S. Canfield!

Don't miss these and the many other great articles about pets of all kinds in the big

SEPTEMBER ISSUE

Formerly POPULAR PETS

Now On Sale At All Newsstands!

(Concluded from page 142)

trade French Commemorative for American stamps. . . . Harry Schmarje, 318 Stewart Rd., Muscatine, Ia., has for sale fan and science fiction magazines. . . . The Swap Shop, Box 141, Velva, N. D., will sell entire stock of science fiction magazines and books at half price; will also consider swapping books, magazines, or other merchandise. . . . Ben Luna, Jr., 401 E. Mobile St., Florence, Ala., has for sale various detective, aviation and science fiction magazines; prices: 3c to 25c; send for list. . . . C. S. Johnstone, 1115 W. Front St., Plainfield, N. J., has approximately 300 science fiction magazines dating from 1927, which he wishes to dispose of. . . . Pat Murphy, Box 275, Lake City, Fla., is 14 yrs. of age and will reply to all letters from fans between 12 and 15. . . .

E. Korshak has moved to 3156 Cambridge Ave., Chicago, Ill., and still has a variety of magazines for sale. . . . Gene Autry, Box 5674, T. C. Station, Denton, Texas, has a very large private collection of all SF magazines from 1924 up to present day, which he is offering to sell in part or whole; must have immediate replies. . . . Leo Black, 2912 Market St., Wheeling, W. Va., is desirous of correspondents of either sex about 17 yrs. old. . . . Jack Townsend, Box 604, Wilson, N. C., wants to subscribe to a good fan magazine. . . . Robert Raffety, 911 E. 42nd Pl., Chicago, Ill., is 20 yrs. of age and would like pen pals from any part of the world; especially those interested in stamp collecting. . . . Charles Biggs, c/o Mrs. Roberts, 407 E. Eden St., Baltimore, Md., would like those owning a series of science fiction books to write and quote prices if they are for sale. . . . H. Heditch, 43 Froddington Road, and R. Clark, 14 Frensham Road, Portsmouth, England, would like pen pals from all parts of the world. . . . J. Gordon, 288 W. 92nd St., New York City, would like to purchase science fiction magazines; name prices. . . . Harry Peterson, Jr., 2221 Carmen Ave., Chicago, Ill., is 16 yrs. old and would like to correspond with those from 14 to 18 yrs. whose hobbies are bike riding, picture postcard and stamp collecting. . . . Mrs. Wm. Johnson, Route 1, Box 87, Kenosha, Wisc., has back numbers of AMAZING STORIES and other SF magazines for sale. . . . Arthur L. Widner, Jr., Box 122, Bryantville, Mass., would like all fans within a fifty mile radius of Boston who are interested in joining his newly founded Stranger Club to communicate with him for further details. . . . Everett P. Bleiler, 58 Round Hill St., Jamaica Plain, Mass., wishes to dispose of duplicates to his science fiction collection. . . . Joseph M. Lewandowski, Jr., 17 Riverview Rd., Brecksville, Ohio, is organizing The Ohio Fantasy Association and would like all Ohioans interested to write him, enclosing a three cent stamp for reply, which will give full details. . . . Alfred Edward Maxwell, 648 S. Main St., Opelousas, La., would like to organize a science fiction club in his vicinity, and is anxious to hear from anyone interested in Astronomy, Photography, Biology, Sports. . . .

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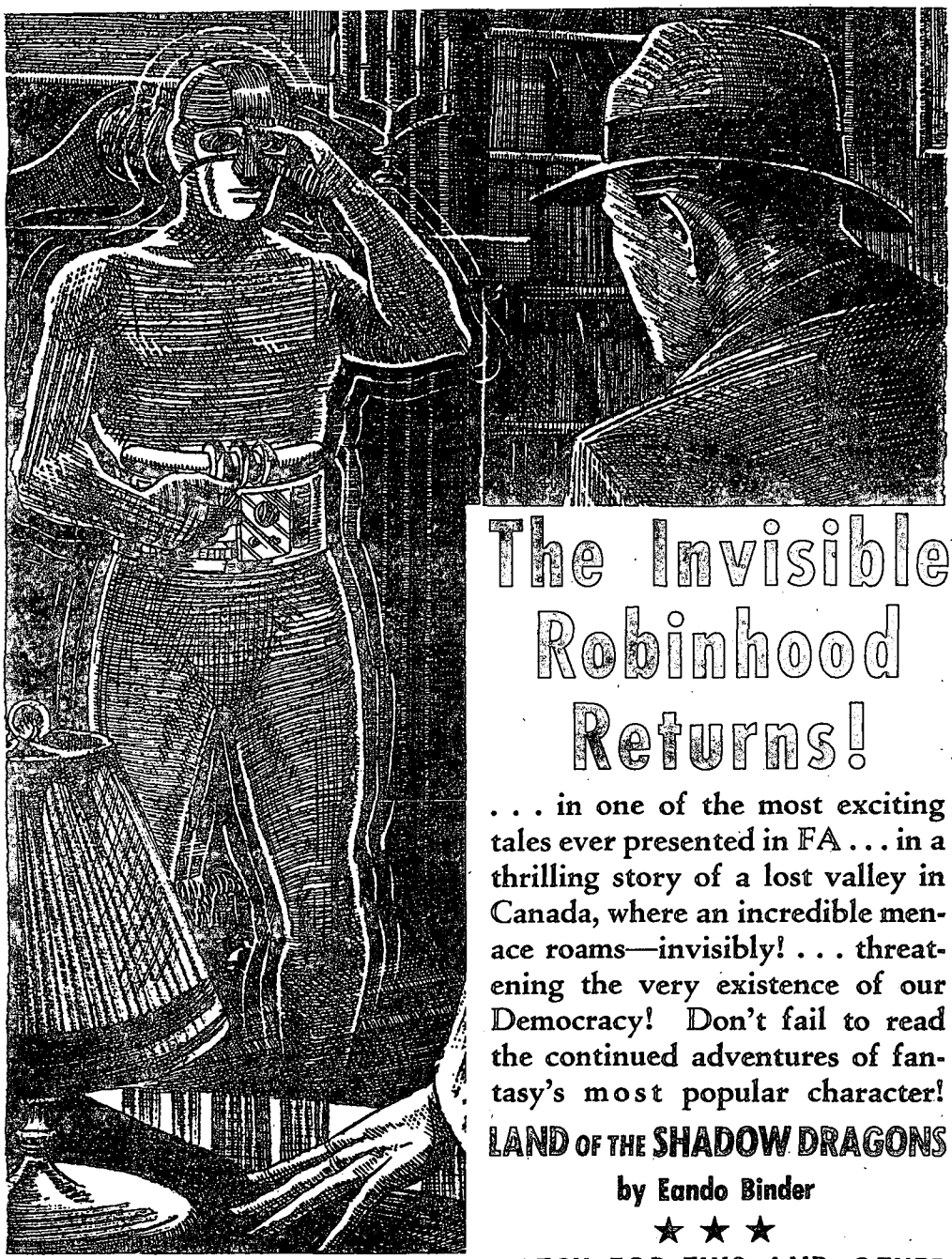

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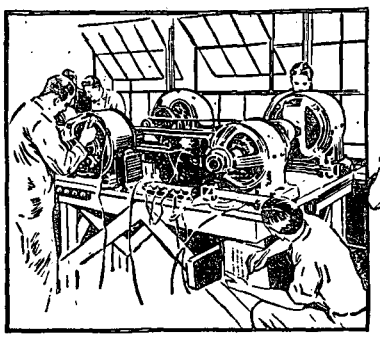

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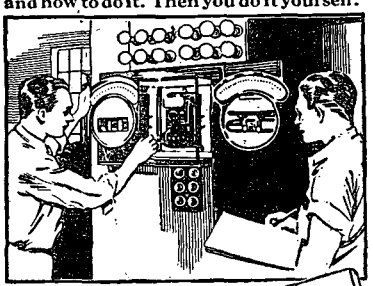

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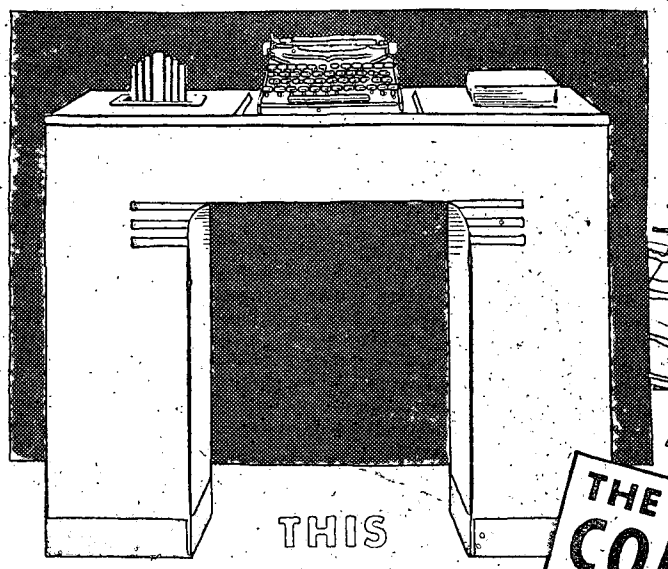

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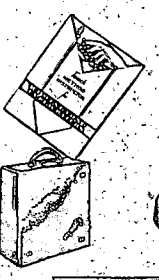

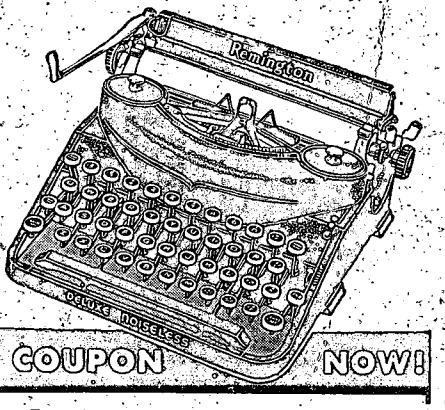

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